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# The 22 Days of Marash: Papers on the Defense of the City Against Turkish Forces Jan.—Feb., 1920

## PART I

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### I. EDITORIAL PREFATORY

THE CURRENT EFFORT of *The Armenian Review* to record the history of events in Cilicia in the post-World War One period and, as well, continue the organ's career-long purpose to offer in the English-language materials on each of the Armenian resistance stands against the Turks during that wartime and in its immediately succeeding years, has led to the present endeavor to review the story of what happened in the city of Marash, geographically and traditionally a part of the Cilician landmass.

This story of the events at Marash immediately follows the *Review's* precedental first publication in English translation of the work of Colonel Edouard Brémond, the Chief Allied Administrator in Cilicia in 1919-20 (1) and, more immediately, a full exposition of the events at Aintab, a city allied to Marash. (See last two issues of *The Armenian Review*). Readers are urged to refresh themselves with a rereading of those passages in the Brémond article which deal especially with the operations at Marash. (2)

In the compilation of this miscellany on Marash, the editors have made considerable avail as source studies of the books of K(rikor) H. Kalustian and Dr. Stanley E. Kerr, the former in Armenian, the latter in English. (3) Little attempt however will be here made to render a comparative critique of both of these works since, basically, there is much agreement between Dr. Kerr and Mr. Kalustian on the issues commonly discussed.

**Marash: Geography and History:** The city of Marash is the center of a *sanjak* (district) of the same name located to the east of the Jihan river at an altitude of 2,600 feet. During the first world war, Marash was a part of the Province of Aleppo, but it has since been attached to the Province of Adana.

Marash is situated near the mouths of three important passes over the eastern Taurus, those descending from Geoksin, Albistan-Yorpuz and Malatia. This accessibility made it an important trade and industrial center before the war. A German-built rail spur connected Marash with Islahieh which, in turn, gave the

city passage to the south over the main trunk line to Bagdad.

An ancient city of uncertain date of foundation, Marash was known to the Assyrian conquerors as **Markafasi** while Ptolemy referred to it as **Marsi**. In the second century A.D., the town was known as **Germanicia**, a name dating back obviously to the times of Germanicus Caesar. (4) Armenians still refer to Marash as **Kermanig** (comp. **Germanicia**), which may very well hint that the Armenian experience with Marash might very well extend back to the time when Marash was Germanicia, that is, in the early days of the Christian era.

In one of his writings, St. John Chrysostom (5) reports that in his day the Marash area had become "almost only Armenian". By 532, the Armenians had obviously become so numerous in the district that Justinian (the Great) attached Marash to the Byzantine province of Melitene (Malatia) and renamed the whole gerrymander as **Second Armenia**. Later, the scribe Michael the Assyrian, writing in A.D. 703, said that the Armenians were "a large presence in Kermanig."

The city passed into Arab hands before A.D. 700. The Caliph Mu'awiya rebuilt it and the area became a bone of contention between Arabs and Greeks. It fell under the complete control of the Arabs after 770, but the Crusaders recaptured it in 1077. One half century later it fell to the Seljuks. Marash became a part of the Ottoman Turkish empire in the 16th century.

**Demography:** 1890 estimates had it that the immediate area of the city was composed of 178,000 Moslems, mostly Turks, Arabs, Kurds and Circassians, as against 50,000 Armenians, and some Greeks and Jews. According to Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, in 1912 the entire area, including the satellite cities of Zeitun and Frnouz and the 28 Armenian villages in the vicinity of Marash city itself, had 65,000 Armenians. By 1914, that figure had grown to about 85,000 Armenians. (6)

**Foreign Presence in Marash:** The Roman Catholic Franciscan Fathers set up their Mission in Marash in the 19th century. Some Armenians were converted to that Faith, and the Armenians had their own Catholic Church in the city. Catholic life in the city was centered around the Latin Monastery.

Personnel of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions first arrived in Marash in the very early 1850's, but the resistance of the local authorities made their proselyting very difficult. As elsewhere, the American missionaries turned to the educating of the young people as their principal burden of work. In 1856, the Central Turkey Girls' College of Marash had already been founded. Nine years later, a missionary school, originally opened in Aintab (1854), was transferred to Marash. This institution first functioned as a high school, became a theological seminary (1879), and finally, in 1888, assumed the character of a formal college.

The Marash Academia High School was opened by Board personnel in 1891. Most of the students at all these educational institutions were Armenians.

In 1914, at the beginning of the world war, there existed three large Armenian Protestant church structures in Marash with a total of 2,000 Armenian Protestant worshippers. This fine system of higher learning functioned along with a fine Protestant-sponsored grade-school system "not suppressed by any other city in Turkey." (7)

Equally impressive were the schools maintained by the Armenian National (Apostolic) authorities of the city. Altogether, these many educational opportunities gave the city's Armenian community a high cultural level. The American and Armenian schooling efforts were also enhanced by the presence a school kept by a small number of German missionaries attached to the local German Orphanages and the German Hospital. The Catholics too had their own places of instruction. Most personnel of the Franciscan Fathers in the city were French brothers.

The Americans also maintained a hospital and orphanage in the city.

**Marash and the Massacres of 1915-18:** Turkish pretextual propaganda rationalizing the need to empty historical Armenia and other areas of Asia Minor during the period of World War I generally cite three "wartime exigencies" as necessitating the "deportations" of the Armenians.

The first of this is that, according to the Turks, substantial numbers of Armenians from Turkey had played important roles, as members of the Russian armed forces, in the defeat of the Turkish corps at Sarikamish, a debacle which precipitated the Russian drive into historical Armenia. (8)

The charge is utterly false. Only a comparatively few Armenians from Turkey were with the Russian forces at Sarikamish. The Armenian volunteer brigades with the Russian army consisted almost wholly of men recruited from the Armenians communities in the Caucasus then under Russian rule. They were Russian subjects who gallantly fulfilled their citizenship obligations to the Russian State.

There was no mass or even minor desertion of Armenians from Turkey to the Russian colors.

Similarly, a large number of Armenians who were subjects of Turkey were performing their responsibilities to Turkey.

When the Turkish Minister of War, Enver Pasha, who had personally led the Turkish force in its disaster at Sarikamish, returned to Constantinople, he lauded his Armenian contingents for their bravery in action against the Russians; but when it became clear that his reputation as a leader was at stake, Enver changed his tune. The Armenians became the scapegoat for Sarikamish. He reported that not only had the Russian Armenian contingents been heavily responsible for Sarikamish but that large numbers of Armenians had deserted his Turkish army and, along with even larger numbers of non-military Armenians who had passed over to the Russian lines, had contributed to the woes of the Turks.

This indicated, he said, that there was a "conspiracy" among the Armenians of Turkey against the Government and that Turkey's war interests called for the "removal of Armenians from strategic places" so that there would be no behind the lines "fifth columning".

The historian finds no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that Sarikamish had simply become the lever the Ittihad needed to activate its program of massacres. (9) The Armenians had to go because they were a "suspect people."

The second charge is of a "revolt" in Zeitun, followed by a third—that Van had "revolted". (10)

In early 1915, the Turks alleged that the Armenians of the mountain community of Zeitun, some three hours north of Marash, had rebelled. The

Turkish authorities said that the proud natives of Zeitun had impeded movements and the provisioning of troops, had made common cause with the enemy, had attacked Turkish military forces and killed and plundered innocent Turks. Most recently, Dr. Kerr has alined himself with a host of foreign observers who have branded the charge as false. (11)

When a large and heavily-armed Turkish force appeared before Zeitun, the Armenians chose to defend themselves. Finally, finding military measures almost inutile, the Turkish authorities turned to wile. On March 16, 1915, the authorities proclaimed:

A revolt has broken out in Zeitun. The duty of the government is to protect the Armenians and Moslems. Should a Moslem fall on the Armenians, he will be brought before a court martial. Let the people rest in peace. The people's government will deal with such criminals. (12)

Unimpressed, with a long history of experience with Turkish insinuations and barbarity, the Zeitun community continued to ward off the attackers under circumstances which will be later recounted in this journal. But finally, early in April, 1915, the defenders of Zeitun crumbled before the Turkish onslaught and, on April 8, the deportations and massacres of Zeitun commenced. (13) It was the opening of the deportations from every corner of Anatolia.

Since 1914, the Armenian enclaves of Turkey had become the scenes of mounting Turkish persecution. By 1915 and the advent of the war, the Armenians sensed that they were in the shadow of the descending Turkish sword. The Armenians of Zeitoun thought it the better part of wisdom and courage to fight rather than to succumb meekly to massacres; and when the savage scenes at Zeitun became known to the Armenians of Van, a city and district of easternmost Turkish-occupied Armenia, and when in fact an imposing Turkish military operation encircled the city and its vicinity, Vannite Armenians flew to arms. On April 20, 1915, the famous defense of Van opened. Thousands of Armenians were saved from the spreading Turkish brutality. The alternative would have been a Zeitun type deportation and carnage.

Kerr stresses that the defense of Van took place *after* the deportations at Zeitun, (14) in other words, after the opening of the "violent phase" of the Turkish program that would lead to the decimation of over 1.5 million Armenians during the war years. Both Zeitun and Van, and the other Armenian defensive stands during the war, were the *results* of the massacres program. They were defensive operations, not revolts.

There were 30,000 Armenians in the city of Marash, and 85,000 in all in the district bearing the same name, when the deportation-massacre operation spread to the district in the middle of April, 1915. (15)

This first exodus of Armenians of Marash, was followed by a second deportation column which left the city on May 28, 1915. A third and final convoy left on June 23, 1916. All three lines of exiles, most of whom were to perish, were directed to the desert areas of Northern Syria. Ras ul Ain and Der el Zor were the principal charnal houses of the Marash contingents. (16)

The sanjak of Marash suffered a 75 percent loss during the massacre years.

About one-half of the population of the city itself seems to have perished. On the 30,000 pre-war Armenians residing in Marash, 24,000 of them were deported. There are estimates that about 16,000 returned to Marash in the post-war period, but it is not clear what percentage of these returnees were once residents of the city. Of the sanjak's pre-war Armenian population of 86,000, only 18,000 returned. (17)

**The Siege of Marash: An Assessment:** The siege of Marash represents a somewhat unique case among the Armenian defensive stands of roughly the post-war era.

Unlike the events at Aintab, which the *Review* has already discussed, and those at H<sup>†</sup>adjin and Deort Yol, which remain to be studied, where the Armenians often stood on their own against the Turks, the Armenian role in the Marash fighting was almost invariably in support of the French armed forces.

Also making the Marash incident unusual was that those same French forces which were found at Marash and which bore the brunt of the siege operation were so heavily larded with personnel of the French **Legion d'Orient** that the French force consisted in majority of such French-uniformed Armenian soldiers. Most of the other French units consisted of French colonial forces—Algerians and Senegalese troops.

But the presence of such a large force of Armenian Legionnaires in the city was perhaps little more than comforting and inspirational to the Armenians. While materials existing on the Turkish insurrection at Marash show clearly that the Armenian Legion troops were, so to speak, champing at the bit to get at the Turks, were ready and totally willing to protect their Armenian civilian compatriots, they were deterred from acting even close to vigorously by French policy which dictated obviously that the latitude of action accorded the Legion was to be heavily restricted.

Brémond (q.v.) broadly hints that the French were actively concerned that the Armenian volunteer units under French command would break out unilaterally against the Turks wherever such Armenian units were stationed in Cilicia. In Marash especially there was a marked French will to place stern halts on the ability of the Armenian soldiers to act in the service of their people.

In other words, the presence of a large armed Armenian force serving under the banners of France and the inability of this Legion to stay the course of events in Marash represents a puzzle. The answer to this is found of course in French policy—that Marash was actually **not** to be liberated in order to serve the French purpose of an accommodation with Kemal.

With the arrival of the British in Marash in 1919 and their failure to protect the Armenians, the Armenian leaders correctly interpreted this lassitude as a symptom of a growing French-British enmity which might very well result in the sacrifice of the Armenians and their interests.

This impression that the Armenians of Marash were being used simply as a pawn in the grim intra-Allied chess game being played by the two European Powers was enhanced when the French came in.

The French military immediately rejected Armenian requests that the Armenian civilian populace be mass-armed for their own self-defense. They even refused to issue weapons to the harassed Armenian villagers in the area. Some Armenians were given rifles by the French, but there was no French zeal to whip the

Armenians into an effective fighting force. It became obvious to the Armenian leaders that the French had no intention in the first place of fighting things out in Marash to a victorious decision.

But the city's Armenians were not unorganized. During the days of the British presence in Marash, an Armenian National Union, consisting of representatives of the political parties and other Armenian dignitaries of the city, had been established in the city along lines already discussed in the Aintab story. The ANU fell into discussions with the French authorities and it even prepared an Armenian plan of defense. Volunteers from among the cityfolk were assigned what arms were available and given strategic positions to guard. Later, a French officer "unofficially" acted as the military advisor of these Armenian defensive preparations.

What made the defense of the Armenians of Marash so difficult, if not practically impossible, was that the Armenian community of the city was actually dispersed over the extensive face of that urban area. Thus, defensive bands could not be emplaced at strategic posts which would protect large concentrations of Armenians, as was the case, for instance, in Aintab, where distinctive "Armenian quarters" were in existence.

Another thing that deterred any extensive Armenian defensive operation in the city was the lack of arms and other weapons of battle. Armenian preparations for self-defensive operations in Marash never advanced, as they did in Aintab, to the formation of an Armenian armory where weapon, powder and ammunition could be devised. Kerr estimates that there were "no more than 200 rifles in the hands of the Armenians at the end of the conflict", (18) which means that only one of every one hundred and eleven Armenians of Marash was armed. On the other hand, while the French kept the Armenians comparatively without the ability to protect themselves, there were over 30,000 Turkish Tchetehs beleaguering Marash; (19) and they had at their disposal literally unlimited quantities of all kinds of war materiel.

The obvious policy of the French prevailed. The French force pulled out—and yet there does not seem to have been any central decision to surrender Marash! There was, rather, a policy—to hold Marash for a while until the diplomats could come to some resolution of the matter; and yet, the French abandonment of Marash did not follow on any orders emanating from any centrum or level of competent government!

To paraphrase Churchill, the evacuation of Marash remains a condundrum within a mystery.

Readers will recall that the issue of withdrawal from Marash so baffled Colonel Brémond, the Chief Allied Administrator in Cilicia, that he said:

The matter of the decision to retreat (from Marash) remains a mystery. There seems to be little doubt that had there been T.S.F. (wireless) apparati at Marash permitting communication with Adana, orders would have been received for our forces not to withdraw. (20)

Brémond's inference is clear. He himself did not order, and would not have ordered, the French to get out of Marash; not had he received any orders or

indications at all from Beirut, or from Paris, that such a withdrawal was in the minds of the French authorities.

It will perhaps be never known how the thing really came about. The guess is that General Quérétte, the commandant of the French forces at Marash, well aware that over the long run the French were to pull out of Marash and other areas of Cilicia, simply reacted to that policy. Rather than standing and fighting, he must have thought that he was best serving that policy of appeasement of Kemal by getting out of Marash sooner than later. There is however no military answer to what the French did. The large French relief force had pulled in and the city had actually fallen to the French. The Turks were pulling out, displaying flags of surrender; and the Turks themselves were saying that the French had come to stay. The situation had been stabilized. Yet, it was the French, who had won, who surrendered, who pulled out lock, stock and barrel—on the very day of their triumph..!

The bitter hostility between France and England over the issue of the mandates in Cilicia and Syria did not escape Mustafa Kemal. The relatively unprotected state of Marash and the obvious unwill of the French and British partners to move to defend the city emboldened Kemal.

Hovannisian points out,

The Turkish insurrection at Marash was to become the first true test of the Nationalist fabric, (21)

and Kerr adds,

(Marash) was the first major battle of the Turkish War of Independence, a war which ended in the expulsion from Anatolia of all foreign armies and the overthrow of the sultanate by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, (22)

which meant of course that had France held out in Marash, Kemal's rising movement, then in its infancy, would have suffered an early and almost fatal blow. Kemal's Nationalist forces might have suffered a set-back which could have effected Allied policy relating to defeated Turkey to that extent where perhaps the course of history itself might have been altered...

Historians are still having convulsions trying to explain what really triggered the opening of the actual fighting between the French and the Turks at Marash, less who gave the orders to move out of the city.

There is little question of course that the early French presence in the city, despite its moderate posture, would have inevitably led to armed clashes between the occupation force and the Kemalist. But if Sarajevo was the call to the World War I shooting, what precipitated Marash?

Those who have worked on the Marash story point to the so-called "Flag Incident" as the catalyst of the actual fighting. But are the lives of man to be ruled by such inconsequential events as what happened on the citadel of Marash in late November of 1919i (23)

The story goes that a French officer, Captain André, had been assigned as civil governor of Marash. He arrived at Marash on November 24 with 150 gendarmes,



mostly Moslems and was billeted at the home of the influential Kherlakian family. Thus,

One evening after dinner with the Kherlakian family, Captain André suggested to one of the young ladies (an attractive Kherlakian daughter) that they should dance. 'I don't like to dance in a city where there are no flags—neither French nor Armenian flags', she replied... (24)

So, on the morning of November 28, the Turks saw a French flag flying over the citadel. An incensed crowd began climbing the hill; they tore down the French flag and raised the Turkish banner.

The Captain was forced to send messages seeking military reinforcements. André was summoned to Aintab. He never returned, but the base for conflict had been poured...

Says Kerr,

The importance of the flag incident was that the Turks had defied French authority with impunity. (25)

And in Turkey, you never give the Turks any indication of weakness or reluctance to fight. Hence, the encouragement of the Turks to fight the French. A French swain had attempted to meet the desires of a comely young lady...and all hell was to break loose for it!

Only those who know the Turks can give credence to such a story. It is a remarkable tale, but because it fits so well with the character of the unbelievable political and military events which made Marash an abattoir, it has substance...

#### FOOTNOTES TO MARASH PREFATORY

(1) Edouard Brémond, "The Brémond Mission", *TAR*, vol. xxix, no. 4-116 (Winter, 1976-77), and *ibid.* vol. xxx, no. 1-117 (Spring, 1977). See especially pp. 37-39 of the latter (Part II of the two-part article).

(2) Esp., *TAR*, vol. xxx, no. 1-117 (Spring, 1977).

(3) K(rikor) H. Kalustian. *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heros Zeitun*. New York Gotchnag, 1934.—Stanley E. Kerr. *The Lions of Marash: Personal Experiences with American Near East Relief, 1919-1922*. State Univ. of New York Press [Albany], 1973. 8A native of Cilicia, Kalustian's compilation of materials on Marash is a work of a good deal of expertise. 8Dr. Kerr, presently a resident of Princeton, N.J., was a junior officer of the United States Army Sanitary Corps. He served as a volunteered Near East Relief worker in Aleppo but transferred in the Autumn of 1919 to Marash where he took charge of American relief efforts after the French withdrawal and after personally having endured the siege of the city. Dr. Kerr left Marash in 1922 only after the last contingent of Armenian orphans were evacuated. Separated from the NER, he returned in 1925 to Beirut where he joined the faculty of the American University of Beirut as chairman of its Department of Biochemistry. He spent four decades in Lebanon. Dr. Kerr's work bears an Introduction by Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian, of the University of California-Los Angeles, and a Foreword by Bayard Dodge.

(4) 15 B.C. — A.D. 19. He was the son of Nero Claudius Drusus, brother of Tiberius, and served as the Consul and supreme commander over the eastern provinces. As such, he "settled" the Armenian succession, organized Cappadocia and Commagene, the district of Marash, as provinces. Germanicus died at Antioch (Antakia) in A.D. 19.

(5) cir. 345-407. Most famous of the Greek Fathers. He is venerated by the Armenians who know him as St. Hovanness **Voskeperan** (St. John the Golden-Mouthed). His voluminous writings bear interesting materials on the Armenians.

(6) Figures in this paragraph are based on material found in the works of Kerr (op. cit.), Kalustian (op. cit.), Haigazn Kazarian (*Tzeghasban Turkeh*, Beirut, 1968), Sarkis J. Karayian, M.D. ("An Inquiry Into the Statistics of the Turkish Genocide of the Armenian", 1915-1918", in *TAR*, vol. xxiv, no. 4-100, Winter, 1972), and (Abp.) Malachia Ormanian (*The Church of Armenia*), (Eng. abstract ed.), London [Mowbray], 1955. The later was once the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.

(7) The immediate quote is from the *Encyclopaedia of Missions*, New York [Funk and Wagnalls], 1891; vol. ii, p. 33. Materials relating to the American Protestant movement in Marash are based on the works of Kalustian (op. cit.), etc., etc.

(8) The Battle of Sarikamish was fought in December of 1914. Enver's "rash project" for a wide encircling maneuver of the Russian forces in mid-winter met with disaster. The Turkish Third Army was all but annihilated. Enver is known to have engaged the enemy at Sarikamish against the advice of the German advisors of the Turkish military.

(9) The ruling **Ittihad ve Terrake** (Union and Progress Party) had formally resolved to massacre the Armenians at secret party conferences held in Salonica in 1910 and 1911, or shortly after the 1909 massacres which shattered the spirit of the new "Constitutional Turkey". The decision had been deferred due to the tumults in the Balkans and elsewhere. With the rising clouds of world conflict, the Turks determined to rationalize the massacres as "wartime necessities."

(10) See Onnig Mekhitarian, "The Defense of Van", in *TAR*, vols. 1-11, 1948-49, in the first eight issues of the of the publication. The issue of Zeitun still remains to be discussed in this journal.

(11) Kerr, op. cit., p. 18. He says, "This charge against the Armenian civilian population is false..."

(12) Haigazn Kazarian. *Tzeghasban Turkeh* (The Genocidist Turk. Beirut, 1968; pp. 176-177.

(13) Kerr, op. cit., p. 14.

(14) Kerr, op. cit., p. 18.

(15) See footnote (6), this Preface, and corresponding text.

(16) Kerr, op. cit., p. 21 and p. 25. Kalustian, op. cit., pp. 827-828, say there remained 6,000 Armenians in Marash after the deportations. Kerr adds (p. 25) that they "remained unmolested in the city throughout the war". Neither author explains why such a relatively large contingent of Armenians was allowed to remain in the city. It is possible that they represented people whose services were needed by the Turks, as those Armenians who stayed back in Aintab.

(17) Kalustian, op. cit., p. 51.

(18) Kerr, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

(19) *Ibid.*, xvi, Preface.

(20) Brémond, op. cit., *TAR*, xxx, no. 1-117 (Spring, 1977), p. 38.

(21) Vid., Kerr., op. cit., p. xxi, Introduction.

- (22) Kerr, op. cit., p. xvi, Preface.
- (23) On the "Flag Incident", see Kerr op. cit., pp. 69-71.
- (24) Kerr, op. cit., p. 71.
- (25) *Ibid*, p. 71.

## II. ACCOUNT OF THE REVEREND ARAM T. BAGDIKIAN(1)

IT IS QUITE CLEAR that the difficulties experienced by the Armenians in the general region of Cilicia were due to the rivalry of the French and the English and their politics relating to the Armenians. Their clashing interests in Northern Syria and Cilicia contributed to the fate of the Armenians.

In July, 1919, the King-Crane Commission was sent to Cilicia to study matters relating to the proposed American mandate of Armenia. In order to represent the interests of the Armenians of Marash and the surrounding areas, the Reverend Aram T. Bagdikian and Hovsep Kherlakian were sent to meet with members of that Commission. On our return to Marash, the British, who had occupied Marash, decided to leave the place to the French. Up to that time, the Armenian National Union, which serviced the affairs of the Armenians of Marash, had not been recognized by the British, whose troops were supervising law and order in the area.

General Crawford, the commanding officer of the British force, summoned unofficially the President of the Armenian National Union to him (3) and told him that the British were about to leave even though there were Tchetehs (4) in the area and the Armenians were in some danger. On September 20, 1919, the British pulled out, leaving the area in French hands. The Armenians heard that the French troops were to take over to protect the Armenians.

On the same day, the President of the Armenian National Union, braving the insecurity of the roads, left for Adana by motorized vehicle and, in the company of Mihran Damadian, (5) saw Colonel Edouard Brémont, (6) who ordered French troops sent to Marash. Thus, as the British moved out, the French moved in (October 31, 1919).

At that time, the Armenian National Union was composed of the following officers: the Reverend Boghos Vartapet Chalekian, Professor Simon Kupelian, Professor (Reverend) Aram T. Bagdikian, Dr. Parsegh Sevan, Dr. Harutune Der Ghazarian, Dr. Arshag Boghosian and Mr. Hovsep Kherlakian. The French immediately recognized the status of this body and this writer was chosen its President.

The duties of the Union were onerous. Not only did we have to look after the affairs and security of the Armenians, but we had to deal with both the French and the Turks.

Dreadful news kept coming in from the areas in which the Tchetehs were operating. Eight residents of Zeitun had been murdered near the Hadjin bridge by the Tchetehs and a number of Armenian villages had been subjected to atrocities. There was murder and looting going on everywhere. Marash, where 27,000 Armenians dwelled—a city next to Adana the most heavily Armenian populated city in Cilicia—was in terror.

On December 6, 1919, the Union learned from a confidential agent of the

French, a Turk, that the Turks were preparing to attack Marash, Zeitun, and Hadjin. They aimed to finish off the Armenians of those cities before the opening of the new year. The Armenian Union met under these circumstances under a cloud of gloom. The Union President was again asked to brave the perils of the road to go to Adana and ask Colonel Brémond for aid. He returned to Marash on December 22 and found that the Turks were swashbuckling against both the French and the Armenians.

Some Armenians attended in unofficial capacity a meeting with a few Turkish leaders and a Memorandum was prepared for the attention of General Quérette. The thing was in the form of an ultimatum. It gave the French forty-eight hours to throw down their arms and evacuate the city; or, said the missive, the French would be taken captive and would be killed. At this, the General summoned the Armenians who had attended the meeting to him and threatened to arrest them. A hurried meeting of the Union ensued at Garabed Belezekian's house where, it developed, what had happened was this: a certain number of Armenians had indeed met with the Turks but had told them that they were not competent to act officially in the matter. They did not subscribe to the Memorandum. General Quérette accepted the explanation.

The great crisis followed on these events.

Eastern Cilicia was a pawn in the game being played by the French and the Kemalists; and Marash was sacrificed to the conflicts among the Powers.

#### FOOTNOTES TO BAGDIKIAN

(1) The Rev. Aram T. Bagdikian was born in Marash (1882) and early studied at the Marash Theological Seminary. In 1894, he was arrested in Adana as a "political provocateur" and was exiled to the island of Rhodes. After terms of study at St. Paul's American College, Tarsus, and again at the Marash Seminary, he became the Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church, Mersin, Cilicia. He graduated from American University of Beirut and from 1906-1919, taught at St. Paul's, returning to Marash where he served as Supervisor of the United Armenian Schools. He was elected President of the Armenian National Union of Marash in 1920, suffered with his family the rigors of the evacuation of the city and in 1920, migrated to the United States, where he became Pastor of the Cilician Evangelical Armenian Church, Boston. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard and later preached at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Worcester, Mass. He passed away several years ago. His son, Ben Bagdikian, is currently one of America's top investigative reporters.

(2) The Report of the King-Crane Commission (1919) has been reproduced in extract form in *The Armenian Review*, vol. xxx, nos. 1-2, Spring and Summer, 1977.

(3) That is, the author.

(4) Kemalist irregular troops.

(5) A controversial Armenian figure of Adana. See references to him in the Brémond work, as reprinted in the *Armenian Review*.

(6) Allied High Commissioner in Cilicia.

### III. EXCERPTS FROM THE ACCOUNT OF THE REVEREND FATHER MATERNE MURE(1)

ALL ARMENIAN CHRISTIANS in Marash—Catholics, Protestants and Apostolics—were victims of the great crisis. Such tribulations as they underwent would not have been decreed by Nero himself...

On the first day of the Kemalist revolution, some Marash Armenians were killed. Others were saved by fleeing to places where the French were found.

By January 21, 1920, in the morning, there had already been a number of Turkish crimes. A well-planned encirclement of the Armenian wards and the French installations had already been executed. The French units were unable to communicate with one another. The Turks thought that the Armenians and the French would not be able to join forces to oppose them. The Turks therefore sent a ridiculous message to the French demanding total surrender and the transfer of the city to Turkish control. French officers were to be allowed to leave without impunity, but soldiers would be made prisoners of war. The Turkish note said that if these stipulations were turned down, the Turks would attack and take the city. Fighting ensued.

The struggle continued until February 11 throughout the city. For 22 days the firing and massacres in the city continued. There was looting, and other crimes. Those were days I could not possibly describe. How can I repeat the terrors that took place in Marash...

The Turkish objective was to destroy all Christian churches, including that of the French. Confident that no new forces would come to the city, the Turks went all out in their operations.

The first massacre took place in that ward known as Sheker-dereh. The Turks put the torch to St. Gregory's Armenian Apostolic Church and all the houses in its vicinity. A French unit, assisted by the Armenians, was able to hold out in another ward; but the women and children were not able to escape the Turks. The Turks simply threw their bodies into the flaming houses.

This was a signal to the Turks that a holy war had opened. On January 23, they fell on our own (Latin) religious establishment and installations, including our clinic. They killed Armenians and other Christians as they prayed at the altars. Three of our Fathers were burned alive. In a short time, our buildings at Yenijeh-Kaleh, Deongeleh and Mujuk-deresi were in ashes. And so January 23 came to a close—the same scenes taking place in the city and its environs.

On January 24, the arson spread throughout the city and the Christians had to abandon their homes. The burnings continued day and night until those awful days came to an end. The flames were blown by the winds sometimes northward, sometimes southwards, consuming everything in their path. Rifle fire was incessant, cannon swept the city. The heroic French and Armenians were fighting the Turks.

Most of the houses that were burned down in Marash were owned by Christians. I believe that finally all Christian structures in Marash went up in smoke. Many people fled to the roofs of their houses, but when the roofs collapsed, the people fell down into the cauldron below. The burning of Saint Astvadzadzin (Apostolic) Church was an especially awful sight, more terrible than the burning of the First Armenian Protestant Church. I can report that here 1,500 Armenians and

French soldiers lost their lives. St. Astvadzadzin's was built on a hill near our Monastery. The place was defended by about 2,000 French and Armenian soldiers. The Turks were not able to reduce the church for seven days. The men fought stubbornly because they knew what lay ahead if they were to fail...

The church was soon surrounded by burning houses and evacuation was impossible. There was on one side of the church a Turkish ward so well fortified that the French could not get to the Turks up in the place. The Turks systematically destroyed the nearby parish house and the school. On the final night, a great fire broke out on the roof of the church. There was no hope that the occupants could be rescued. Those who fled the holocausts were cut down as they left the place; those who remained were incinerated. Of about 50 soldiers there and 2,000 Christians, practically no one was saved...

When the tumults broke out, the children were in the schools. They could not get back to their homes. The Armenians in the area of the church begged us to get the French troops to help them. They were taken to the church where they died along with their other compatriots. The whole number of victims must have been around 3,700. There were in the Latin compound about 200 French soldiers, mostly Algerians. Our establishment was on a high hill and overlooked the city. The Turks were reluctant to attack the place; but they shot at us from a distance from their minarets...

On February 1, Lt. V.....furlled the French flag over the Latin compound. Those people who were huddled in the church and other buildings were encouraged by this. On that same night, the French flag was broken out over every position held by the French troops, that is in about fifteen places. This gave everyone the picture that the French had totally taken Marash. The order to display the flags had been issued by the commanding officer because a relief force was on its way from Adana. The flags would act as a signal to the new force where the French positions were located. The flags encouraged the Christians, dispirited the Turks; who knew that the fighting was far from over.

On the afternoon of February 7, the relieving French column was seen nearing the city and setting up its headquarters some 4000 meters away. A part of the force took positions to the north and south of the city, penetrated to the west, and established communications with the city command.

An intense shelling of the city commenced and continued until the 10th of February. Its purpose was to soften up the enemy for surrender. Only a few Turks now thought that the French would withdraw. The Turks broke out with flags of surrender. Alas, that no avail was made of this! The order given to evacuate the city on February 10 was irrevocable.

On the evening of February 9, I noted that the French officers at the Monastery were about on serious business. I was told privately and confidentially that the French military had received orders to evacuate the Monastery. I was enjoined to secrecy. The city was abuzz with rumors that the French troops were about to leave.

The Armenians have complained that the French emptied the city without giving the Armenians any prior notice of such an intention. That charge is unfortunately true.

The Armenian Church of the Forty Sainted Soldiers was found in Marash's lower ward. No sooner had the task force arrived when the 2,000 Armenians who

had taken refuge in the church came out and joined the troops. Father Hovaness Maljian, an Armenian Catholic priest, was among them...

All passage into the city had been forbidden because of military considerations. The Armenian Catholic Church and its contiguous First Armenian Protestant Church were found in the center of the city. With them, comprising a sort of triangle, was the Franciscan church. The area was totally cut off from communications with the French and Armenian areas of the city. On the afternoon of February 9, the First Armenian Church burst out in flames. The people in the church, about 1,500 in number, were able to get to the Armenian Catholic installation.

The French force defending this sector did not receive the order to evacuate the city because the place was totally isolated from the rest of the city. I have been told that the French troops there did not learn of the evacuation operation until February 11, or one day after the bulk of the French troops pulled out. When the departure of the French became known, the throng in the Armenian Catholic church fled the premises in order to join us (at the Monastery). They were massacred by the Turkish population. Only a few, one of them Serop Kherlakian, who later told us of all this, survived...

The hour for withdrawal (on February 10) had been set precisely for 6 p.m. Father Joseph and I were asked to stand before the portals of the Monastery, where there were now about 3,700 Armenians and when the French troops marched by the Monastery, we were to fall in with them. They categorically ordered us to empty the Monastery...

When our column was fifty feet up the road, the Turks started firing on us from a minaret. The grim procession was forced to halt.

When the order to leave had been made known, many women and children left to seek asylum in the American installation. Their men folk remained back in the Monastery to serve in the defensive forces. Now fully aware of the French intention to leave, the Turks urged the defenders to give up, and so they did. They, along with French personnel, were thrown into prison.

At 10 p.m. on that same evening, we had finally been able to wend our way to the French headquarters, which was found a bit off from the hospital and near the American mission building where, over the last 21 days, a great conclave of Armenians had gathered. Most wanted to leave with the French.

At 10 p.m., the whole multitude moved off southward to join the task force camped outside the city. We passed through the city, left its precincts and entered the fields and orchards. The thousands of Armenian women and children following me were not observing strict rules of silence. They were screaming. Children were calling for their mothers, and vice versa. Our way through the city was grotesquely illuminated by the flames. The place was so alive with light and voices that it seemed we were inviting attack. A high-ranking French officer, perceiving the danger, tried to drag me away. I protested, and he told me politely why it was he was trying to get me away...

And so our struggling column reached the task force. There were 3,200 refugees with us. We continued up the road, pausing on occasion.

In the center of the French camp there was an enormous munitions and depot. These materials could not be saved. The French simply blew the whole thing up,

and the ashen smoke from the conflagration swirled to the sky. At dawn, the Turks hoisted their banner of triumph over the city...

At 6 p.m. on February 11, we reached the village of El Oghlou, where we camped out in the open.

On the following day, the column moved on and reached Bel-Punar. The weather was at the moment good...

On the evening of February 12, it started snowing heavily. We struggled through the great drifts to Islahieh, ordinarily a distance of only five hours. We did it in fourteen...and we lost the road. It was just impossible to pause and rest, for to stand still or throw oneself down would mean to freeze to death. Those who no longer could walk simply died on the spot. The road became lined with corpses...thus 1,200 Armenians perished. Children had to be left on the roadstead since their mothers no longer could carry them...

The roads were littered with belongings and rifles abandoned by the troops...and of course the inevitable bodies. The suffering of the people was awesome on that road from Bel-Punar to Islahieh...I made it finally to Islahieh...but...

On February 15, Sunday, they placed us and 50 refugees in a rail wagon to be taken to Adana. This was all the French commander could do for us and these people...and so we reached Adana station late at night...where I found that my colleague Father Joseph had died...

(The Marash series to be continued)

#### FOOTNOTES TO FATHER MURE

(1) Chief Abbot of the Monastery of the Franciscan Fathers in Marash. This section is extracted from the French original of his *Le Massacre de Marash*, Paris, 1920, as compiled by Father Luppin. Armenian extracts appear in K(rikor) H. Kalustian, *Marash gam Kermanig yev Heros Zeitun*, New York [Gotchnag], 1934; pp. 794-894.

**An hitherto unpublished memoir of the events at Marash, written in graphic diary form by a survivor of the Marash holocaust, Mr. Ghevont Chorbajian, of Fresno, California, will be added to this series of papers. This manuscript was offered to TAR quite coincidentally after typography of the medley had been executed.**



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THE ARMENIAN REVIEW

212 Stuart St., Boston, Mass. 02116

# The 22 Days of Marash: Papers on the Defense of the City Against Turkish Forces Jan.—Feb., 1920

## PART II

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### I. Extracts from the Work of Dr. Mabel Evelyn Elliott

*Extracts from Dr. Elliott's **Beginning Again at Ararat**, New York [Revell], 1924*

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

*In 1924, the appearance of a work of an autobiographical memoir nature written by Dr. Mabel Evelyn Elliott, [1] accorded the American public a contrite, hard-hitting account of four important events in the post-war history of Asia Minor — the siege and surrender of Marash, affairs in Ismid, the relief effort in the Independent Republic of Armenia and the circumstances of its destruction, and finally "the inconceivable horrors of the Smyrna and Anatolian evacuations" after the triumph of the Kemalist over the Greeks.*

*As the representative of the American Women's Hospitals' committee of the Near East, Dr. Elliott, in her four years of dispensing medical assistance to the victims of the barbarities of war in the Near East, endured all the events of which she spoke, including the evacuation from Marash.*

*Of her, Mrs. Grace M. Kimball, President of the Medical Women's National Association, said:*

*Few, if any, women in the history of humanitarian work have a record equal to that of Dr. Mabel Elliott, who has for four years been one of the most notable members of the American Women's Hospitals personnel in the Near East. [2]*

*an assessment substantiated by materials found in Dr. Elliott's self-effacing book, and by testaments rendered by numberless Armenian sources.*

*Mrs. Elliott reports that actually she went to Marash as one of the women certified and equipped by the Hospitals' committee, to work for the Near East Relief. [3] As such she went through the gamut of the experience, from the months*

*of the British advent in the city, through the clamorous days of the struggle against the Turkish insurgents and finally the tortuous evacuation march itself.*

*Our republication below of chapter VII — "Diary of Siege of Marash" [4] and the following chapter — "Flight Through Winter Snows" [5] — would be almost post-climactic if we were not to review what Dr. Elliott had to say about events which immediately preceded the opening of the French-Turkish hostilities in Marash, as found in chapter VI — "Peace that is no Peace". [6]*

*Here, Dr. Elliott tells of the coming of the British to Marash. In September, 1919, she visited Aleppo where she heard that the British were withdrawing from Cilicia and, she says, "this was a thunderclap" since less than two weeks before, while still in Marash, she had seen no indications of a British evacuation.*

*In Aleppo,*

*There were charges and countercharges; it was said that the French accused the British of attempting to hold Cilicia permanently, regardless of the treaty [which had turned over Cilicia to French mandation--ed]; it was said that the British, forced to relinquish Cilicia, were intentionally doing so in such a manner that the French could not hold it. It was said that the French had sold arms to Ankara; it was said that the British were arming the Turks in Marash... [7]*

*Although warned by British personnel not to return to Marash, Dr. Elliott left to reassume her duties in that city. At Aintab, she met British troops coming out. When she got to Marash, she found the French and Turks already engaging in minor incidents of combat. Week by week the incidents increased.*

*The French openly said that the English had armed the Turks before leaving Marash or, at least, the English had either purposely refrained from thoroughly disarming the Turks, or that, after disarming them and receiving orders to leave, they had left the collected rifles and ammunitions in places where the Turks could find them. To our indignant protests against such a charge, the French retorted 'then where are the Turks getting their arms?'*

*We were left to choose between two theories. Either the monstrous accusation was true, or the British, during eight months of martial law in Marash, had been unable to disarm the Turks... [8]*

*On her own, Dr. Elliott commented:*

*I cannot believe anything unworthy or dishonorable about either of them [that is, the French and English officers Dr. Elliott met in Marash—ed]. But this I do know; the responsibility for what has occurred in Tukey since that time rests on those men who were meeting in diplomatic conference in Europe. The details do not matter. The fact remains that a united Christian Europe might have shown, in the middle of old hatreds which is the Near East, a spirit of cooperation and honesty before which any effort of the Turk would have fallen defeated. Instead, Europe brought nothing new to Turkey. The*

*game played by the European Powers was the old game of hatreds and greeds with which the Near East has been familiar since Nineveh worshipped Baal. France, England, Italy and Greece behaved like thieves quarreling over their spoils, and their quarreling was the Turks' opportunity. [9]*

*Dr. Elliott then returns to the situation in Marash itself. She reports an attack on the American Hospital, the placing of a French machine gun on the premises for defensive purposes—which she felt was simply a provocation for the Turks to attack. This was the first morning of the insurrection.*

*The second morning brought us realization of the situation. Until then, we had been much too busy and too excited to think of ourselves. But the steady sound of rifles and machine guns, still continuing after thirty-six hours, had settled into a grimness more terrifying than its violent outbreak,,, it was quite possible that we would not be able to leave Marash. [10]*

*And then, her account of what followed.*

## CHAPTER VII DIARY OF THE SIEGE OF MARASH

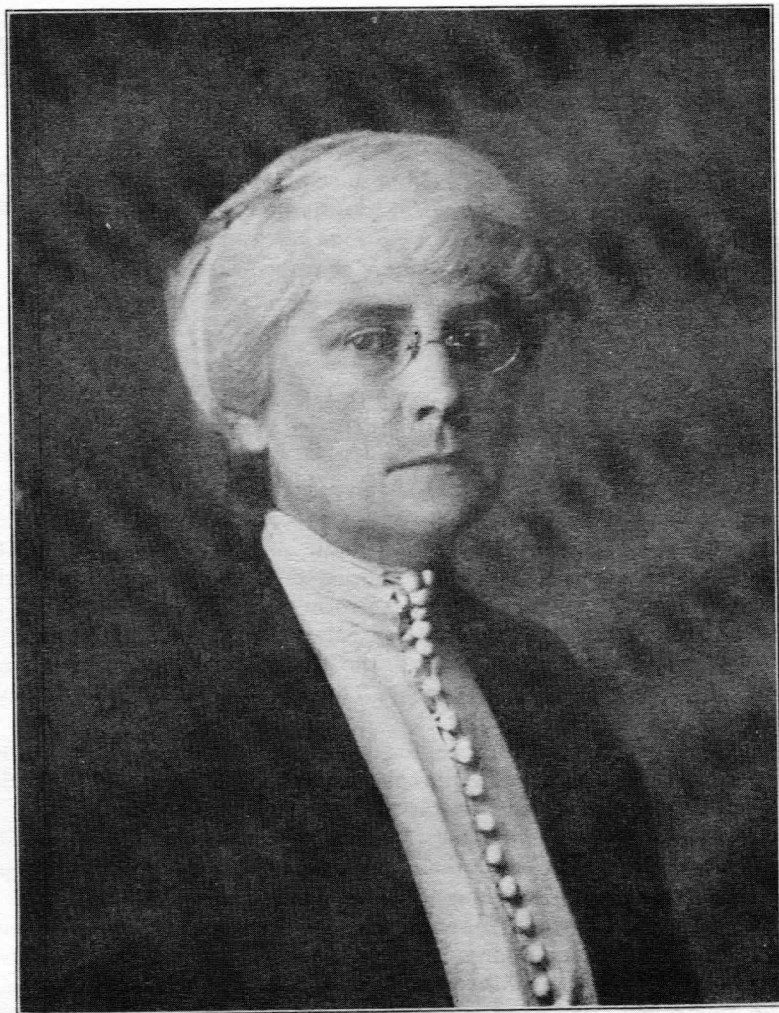
JANUARY 22, 1920. — This is Thursday, and the trouble began here Tuesday. Since then it has not been safe to leave the protection of our walls. Lieutenant Counarai was sent out from barracks last night to bring in wounded. He did not find any, but tried to return with eight marooned Algerians. When he reached the hospital with them only three were left; the other five had been killed. He says the streets are full of dead. Miss Blackly and Miss Leid(11) were in town when the firing began; they have got back as far as the house across the street from us. They were seen at the window once, yesterday. There is a steady storm of bullets down the street between us.

It was a mistake to put the machine gun here, for naturally the Turks have the hospital covered. We asked to have it removed, and it was taken away over the back wall the first night, but the Turks do not know that. Last night French headquarters sent to us for dressings for their wounded. We had to go into the operating room with a light to get them, and there was a shower of bullets until we got out. I am sure the Turks thought we were the machine gunners.

The French are using all their machine guns and cannon; a constant fusillade. Bullets never ceased their whining, and the cannon shots rattle our windows. The Turks have two or three machine guns but no cannon, I understand.

The Turks first tried to get over the mountains. We saw them through our glasses, soldiers advancing in regular formation. They were driven back by French shelling. Now it is the Turks already in Marash who are fighting. They are entrenched in houses all over the city, and it is very difficult for the French to dislodge them.

All day long the French have been shelling the hills. It is terrible and beautiful to see the flash of fire and roll of black smoke against the white mountains. The Turks cannot advance by daylight against such fire, and at night the French have



MABEL EVELYN ELLIOTT, M.D.

patrols out. The difficulty is in the fighting everywhere in a city of walled courtyards.

We have one hundred and seventy-five persons in our household; patients, employes and visitors who were here when the battle began, with stray ones who have managed to reach us since. The people in the next house made a hole in the compound wall and got through it to us. One poor Armenian came in last night. He and his wife and children lived in a little adobe hut beside the house from which the Turks are firing on us. The Turks broke down his door and shot him. They thought they had killed him and went away. He crawled out through the Turkish cemetery to us.

All these people have some one they love, outside...

Our telephone wires were cut at the beginning of the outbreak and the French have no wireless, so Marash is completely cut off from the rest of the world. Perhaps you have had no news of this, and are not worrying at all, but going about happily as usual; I hope so. America is such a happy place.

January 24. — Last night was incredible. This morning we looked out at the hills and mountains, amazed that they are still there, unchanged. Such a roaring and splintering all night through. The firing gets worse steadily.

There are five big fires now—homes of influential Turks. These fires must have their effect, for they are impressive to see. But one cannot account for the Turks. The second morning of this, two of them came to the French barracks under a white flag, and said the Turks wanted to stop fighting. The French heartily agreed, and the bugles blew "Cease firing". Then the Turks didn't cease.

The French could only begin firing again. I think there is no one in authority who can stop the Turks, now that they have begun to fight. The trouble began when the French arrested five leading Turks here. This morning two of them asked to be released, saying that they could stop the battle. The French let them go, and they went out into the town. No word has come back from them.

Sunday morning, January 25. — The French torches have started many more fires in Turkish houses, and a battery shelled the house from which the Turks have been firing on us. Our front yard was so full of smoke that we could not see the compound gate. The shells passed directly over us with a terrific noise. Two shells went through the roof of the Turkish house and one through the wall.

Just after supper last night, Mr. Kerr and Mr. Snyder (13) got through to us, with an Algerian soldier. They had come to rescue Miss Blakely and Miss Leid from the house across the street, and to take back to Dr. Wilson (14) supplies for the wounded. He is in the Children's Hospital and it is filled with wounded French. That hospital and French headquarters are in the same compound, and directly across the street is the college, all protected by high walls. So all those Americans can communicate with each other so nicely. Poor Miss Buckley (15) is quite alone in Bethshallum orphanage, far away at the other end of the city. No news has got through from her.

It seemed years before the two men got back with Miss Blakely and Miss Leid. They had to go a long way around, under cover as much as possible. We worked all the time, packing supplies for Dr. Wilson. When they got back Mr. Kerr was very discouraging, saying that a general massacre of Armenians is expected. Mrs. Power (16) and I have talked it over, and decided that those two men are mere infants, trying to make things seem as bad as possible.

All night long the skies are red-lighted in every direction by the raging fires, and the cannons roar and the heavens shake. Around our hospital at the other end of Marash everything must be completely burned away. The whole city is overhung with clouds of smoke.

The French are hoping for reinforcement today, over the Ishahieh road. Yesterday they sent out to Armenians disguised as Turks to meet the troops and guide them in.

Monday, January 26. — Every hour produces a new big fire. One by one the French are picking out the Turkish houses and burning them. It fills us with amazement to see the precision with which the French place torch after torch all over the city. This morning we saw scores of Armenians loaded with bedding and household things, running through Turkish fire into one of our orphanages — in a few minutes a large Turkish house was a mass of flames, right among the adobe houses the Armenians had left.

A soldier has just come with a note from Vartan, our buyer. He has a number of refugees and soldiers in his house. He sent word that all is well there, and that he is anxious about us; if we need anything we are to send to him.

January 27. — Who would have thought this could continue so long! Last evening we were quite cheered by a visit from Captain Arlabose, the French doctor. The French have cut through walls and made a passage way to us. He came through that. After he had gone he sent back a present of two huge Senegalese guards and an orderly.

We were just settled for the night when there was a knocking at our gate. I went out to order it opened, and found an Armenian, badly wounded. He reported massacres in his part of the city. While I was dressing his wounds, Mr. Snyder came with a letter from Dr. Wilson; it confirmed the massacres, but tried to be encouraging. The French have sent our Armenians dressed as Turkish gendarmes to Ishahieh with telegrams to Adana for reinforcements and to Beirut for airplanes. We pray God they may be successful in getting them.

All night, Armenians kept coming in with stories of massacre. Today the guns are silent, except for scattering shots, and I find myself longing for the sound of the artillery. It would keep the Turks from their devil's work.

Mrs. Power is a trump, and my one comfort here. If she were the dependent kind, I don't think I could stand it. I feel that when I get out of this, if I ever do, I shall never take responsibility again.

I have ordered a tree cut down. We have hardly any wood left. Cooking only two meals a day, for patients and all.

January 28. — How our spirits go up and down! Today we are all so happy. News came from one of the big churches; there are nearly two thousand Armenians there, safe so far. And I feel they will be Dr. Artine (16) is with them. There are two big churches, and the Armenians have dug an underground passage between the two, and the French have given them arms, so they have been able to defend themselves. We are all so glad. Their houses have all been burned, but nobody cares about that, with this wonderful news that their dearest are alive...

Later: We are getting stragglers from the massacres. It is very terrible. There has been another big massacre at the other side of the city, and we can only pray that some of the men have been able to escape into Miss Buckley's orphanage.

I wrote that, without thinking what I was saying. At home one thinks of women and children first. That is because we Americans are so blessedly safe all our lives. I did not understand until now the stories of Armenian men saving themselves in massacres and leaving their women behind. We used to think it cowardly. It isn't; it is an instinct of race-preservation. The Turks always try to kill the men and boys; the women have a chance of living—then their children will be Turks—but the men have none at all. The first thing Armenian women think of is to save the men and boys...

Captain Arlabose came again yesterday morning, and also last night. He is a comfort. He sent more men last night to help guard the houses next us. They are full of refugees—their basements, of course. No one dares go upstairs because of the bullets. These people are added to my family and come to me for everything. A soldier came just now to ask if he might fire on the Turkish house from which the Turks are firing on us. It is fortunate that I am a soldier's daughter.

January 29.—No change in the situation, and the massacres continue. But last night brought the happiness of news that reinforcements are near; cannon at a distance have been heard by many different persons. The Turks are bolder all the time. Surely it is because they realize that this is the end for them, and are desperate!

We get horrible stories from Armenians who are escaping the massacres. I try to keep them from being repeated, but the basement and compound is full of people, and of course they will talk.

The wife of the photographer who has done all my kodak printing since I have been here came in with one child, the oldest, a little girl about seven. She sits all day, staring. We have given her work to do, but she cannot do it. She had to leave all her other children, one a nursing baby, and come with this one. The Turks had surrounded the quarter, and were to begin the massacre next morning. The Armenians had no weapons. They talked it over, and decided to try to escape. To do it they had to crawl, one by one, between two Turkish guards, so close that the Turks could have touched them. One of the old Armenian men took control, and chose the ones to go. Only the men, and the women and children who could control themselves and keep quiet, were allowed to go. If one of them made the slightest noise, they would all be lost. So this woman had to choose between dying with her little children, or escaping with just this one and leaving the others. One might say she had better stay and die. But then she could not have saved this one. Her husband was not there, but she had word that he is safe in the church. She will have to face him and tell him what she did.

Fifty-eight Armenians got out; they were crawling out all night, creeping without a sound past the Turkish guards in the dark.

January 30.—We have no further news of anything. The French are only trying to hold out until reinforcements come. They know that they can never subdue the Turks here without help. In the meantime they are burning the city bit by bit. A thousand Armenians are in the American college compound now. They are being fed one meal a day from our supplies. A message has just come asking if I can furnish salt? For a thousand? No.

A poor old woman came in this morning, crawled to our gate. She had two bullet wounds, and every bit of skin was worn from her knees, where she had crawled on them to get to us.



We are straining our ears for the sound of an airplane or big guns on the plain. Will they come? Have the telegrams got through? What does the outside world know about us? Oh, one can't stop and think.

January 31. — And things must be the same. We are a little more crowded by the Turks. I had a distressed note from Vartan; they are hard-pressed.

My photographer has been killed.

Last night was the coldest we have had this winter—a biting wind, and everything frozen. Today is a little warmer and I do hope it will stay so, for the suffering is tenfold in the bitter weather. From now in, there will be many dying of starvation, for this is the tenth day.

Last night our squadron of nine men was keyed up almost to breaking point. Our back door neighbours were doing something, we did not know what. One of our men was killed, a black. To think that he was born in Africa, to die here in a French uniform, protecting us! Today, we learn that many more Turks got into the clump of houses behind us.

February 1. — Just as day was breaking, one of the night nurses came to say that Vartan's house was on fire. The next thing was that Vartan was wounded. We took in more than a hundred refugees from Vartan's house. His wound is not dangerous, a shot in the thigh. We operated; had to lay the flesh open from hip to knee, but he will be all right after a few weeks in bed.

Yesterday two Zeitoun men came through the trench from the French barracks, both with flesh wounds. They are magnificent men, mountaineers, tall, strong and very proud. They told me, while I dressed their wounds, that the men of Zeitoun are fighting again, have been fighting since the Turks attacked the French here. They had no more ammunition, and these two men have come in to get some from the French. They came through the Turkish lines in the night, and were wounded, but got away. They want to go back tonight. Zeitoun can hold out for ever, they say, if only they can have ammunition.

An Armenian woman just came to me, so indignant because she knows some one in the neighbourhood who has a large stock of food and is keeping it. I said, "Do they want us to buy it?"

"Buy it!" she said. "Why should you buy it? Take it by force. Is this a time to buy and sell?" She is feeding fifty people in her house next door.

A time like this brings our characteristics that are usually hidden—selfishness, nobleness, greed, self-restraint, courage. Sometimes, I hate the whole world when I see some one, in all this strain and danger, doing a mean, petty thing; but always, a little later, some one does something so big and fine that I feel it is worth to be here. If it is the finish, it is the finish, that's all. One of the girls said something big last night. Something made her think that Mrs. Power and I were leaving, abandoning them all. Mrs. Power said, "We wouldn't do that, Margaret," and she answered so sweetly, "Even a mother leaves her children at a time like this."

A note just came from Dr. Wilson asking if we have a man on the place whom we could send out to Aintab as a messenger with an appeal to Admiral Bristol? (18)

February 2. — Yesterday Dr. Wilson sent his message out by the Zeitoun men who came in day before yesterday. The French sent out another call for help by them, too. We are not told whether they will get the ammunition they came to get for Zeitoun.

The woman who had to abandon her children heard today that her husband is dead, killed in fighting. She is alone now, with the one child, but he never knew what she had done.

February 4. — An unusually quiet night. The church is still safe, and the twenty-five hundred Armenians there have food. A messenger got through from them again today. We have been unable to get any communication with Miss Buckley in Bethshallum orphanage.

Two weeks this afternoon since this started. The French are gradually gaining ground again, even without reinforcements. If they are able to win before help comes, it will have a more crushing effect on the Turks all over Turkey.

We have a French boy here, very ill with pneumonia, and we feel that we cannot bear it if he dies. He looked at me so pathetically the first night and said, "Me, I have been counting the days until I could get back to beautiful France, and now I will die here." He will go back to France if care and will power can save him.

February 5. — Very good news yesterday. Captain Fontaine is in the lower part of the city, back from Islahieh, and Captain Hervier is back with his airmen from Aintab. Both have wounded men, but none lost.

February 6. — An airplane has appeared overhead.

It flew around and dropped messages. We don't know whether the French found them or not. There is nothing so wonderful as an airplane. The Turks fired on it. We thank God that they have no aircraft guns. It went away, and then a second one came, and the French fired two rockets to indicate their position.

February 7. — My poor pneumonia French boy died yesterday afternoon. How hard we fought to save him. In the morning, he took out some postcards from France and was crying over them. Oh, it is terrible, terrible to send these poor boys over here...

After the airplanes yesterday, two letters came from the Turks, one addressed to the French and one to the Americans. We do not know what the French one contained, but the one to us said that this is not a local movement, but a national one, and that the Turks of Marash could not stop if it they would. In other words, it is Mustapha Kemal's movement...

February 8. — We were busy until four o'clock this morning; the First Protestant Church was burning. We thought there were hundreds of Armenians in it. We heard later, however, that they had all got over to another safe church.

Then came the great news that reinforcements have reached us at last. Soon we began to hear them. All night the shelling was heavier than ever before. Then there were two more enormous fires, which burned a whole quarter of the city. We doubled our guards around the compound walls and had everything filled with water.

We must be doubly vigilant from now on, for it appears that the Turks will not surrender, but will keep on fighting and doing whatever damage they can.

The reinforcements seem to be working their way up through the city, contrary to the expectations of Captain Arlabose, who thought they would come around the barracks.

He amused us very much last night. He went to French headquarters and was in bad humour when he came back. He said anybody would be a neurasthenic who stayed there long — there were too many officers and no two of them could agree. It

was too depressing, he could not stay there. So I said, "You must come here where we are all so calm and happy."

"Bien sur, ici c'est beaucoup plus heureuse", he answered seriously.

We have taken in fifteen men with frozen feet tonight, and more are coming. The weather is bad.

Our precious airplane has just come and gone again. If only we could reach it with a message. But anyway, it seems a connecting link with the outside world.

February 9. — French reinforcements consist of three battalions, nearly three thousand men, and eight cannon. There is fierce fighting on all sides of us this morning, and we are having the worst snowstorm of the winter. Snow lies thick on everything and fills the air so that nothing can be seen.

News came to me yesterday that Miss Buckley was killed on the first day. We knew that all the Armenian girls in the Rescue Home were killed as soon as the fighting began, but we had not heard this before. I do not believe it; I could not bear to believe it. I have said nothing to Mrs. Power about it.

One of our nurses learned last night that her two little children are killed, and another nurse's mother was killed with them. The commandant of the machine-gun company has been killed, the only French officer lost so far...

Beyond the second house from us is a narrow alley, and the next house is all stone and Turkish. The people in it, however, have been quiet and peaceful. Last night they threw a paper over the wall and it fell in the alleyway. Of course, no one dared go out to pick it up. They came to ask me what to do about it. I told them to call over the wall and tell the person from whom the letter came to write another one. So later two new letters came. One was from a Turk who, we hoped, had protected some Christians. It said that he had had thirty-five women and five men in his house, but that the other Turks had forced him to give them up and had killed them all in the street outside his house...

The other letter was addressed to Mr. Lyman, (18) a missionary, and asked the Americans to plead with the French for the lives of Turkish women and children.

February 10. — Today started as usual until Captail Arlabose came. We both saw that he was much distressed. Nothing we could do would cheer him. He went to headquarters and came back looking more miserable than before. He has been trying to eat luncheon with us. He has just told us that the French are going to retreat.

## VIII FLIGHT THROUGH WINTER SNOWS

It was many minutes before we could believe that this was true. But Captain Arlabose's face convinced us more than his words.

In the hospital no one but ourselves knew the news, and the French were insistent that no one else should know. Mrs. Power and I went immediately to see what the other Americans were going to do. Our heads were swimming. Of course so far as going or staying was concerned, each must decide for himself. Some must stay, and some must go, so that none of the Armenians would be left without the little help we could give them.

The way was more difficult and dangerous if we left, but more horrible, we

thought, if we stayed.

The Armenians at headquarters had heard the news before we had, and they were sobbing and screaming. Thousands of them, screaming! They had relied on us, on the promises of the great, powerful Allies. They had come back to Marash, to their wrecked homes and lives, under our protection. Now they were being left to the Turks.

How many times I had said, "Don't be silly! Can't you realize that the Allies are here, the Allies have won the war? Haven't you been told, and told, and told again, that you are safe now? Why do you foolishly imagine things to frighten yourselves? The Allies are here." It was so hard to think.

Captain Arlabose looked actually happy when I told him that Mrs. Power and I were going with the refugees, and Miss Shultz (19) had decided, too. The rest had not decided. Miss Buckley, if she were still alive, was in Bethshallum and could not be reached. Dr. Artine, with the twenty-five hundred Armenians, was still in the churches. I prayed that the news might reach them, so that they could fight their way out before it was too late. A note came to me from the hospital. They had heard the news; what should they do?

I think that all the rest of my days I shall suddenly hear from time to time that sentence quietly said, sometimes almost in a whisper, "What shall we do now, doctor?" I have stood and stared dumbly for minutes at a time, in absolute despair as to what to say.

When they saw us preparing to leave, the question of many was settled, for they simply picked up their packs and left. In the meantime, hundreds of people were piling in. The compound was a mass of frantic Armenians. Parents came into the wards, picked up their almost dying children, and carried them away. In the midst of this Captain Arlabose was getting all the wounded soldiers out of the place.

He said he would stay with us all night. Mr. Kerr came down, thinking that we were leaving that night and ready to guard the hospital. He brought word that all the Armenians who were leaving should go that night, as the French thought of issuing an order forbidding any one to go with them. So I bundled up our poor nurses, giving them everything nice and warm, and with many assurances and promises that we would overtake them on the road, we started them out into the night...

We had no sleep that night. Dawn came on an almost empty hospital. Vartan was one of the last to go. I had got a donkey for him, had blankets and food packed on it, and sent him off riding, accompanied by all his family; it was impossible for him to walk, with the wound in his thigh. Then we fixed our rolls.

A woman who could not have lived long, a tubercular case, had got up out of bed in the night, taken off her clothing, and sat by the open window. We found her sitting stark upright, frozen stiff. The ground was too solidly frozen; we could not dig a hole in which to bury her.

Captain Arlabose had given us instructions to come to the caserne at six. Miss Dougherty and Dr. Crathern (20) in the meantime had decided to come with us. As soon as it was dark, we four women went creeping through the trenches from the college to the caserne, and were welcomed into a warm, filthy room, the walls of which shut out some of the screams of the Armenians. No one had any news of 'Miss

Buckley, and there was still doubt as to whether messengers would be able to reach her of Dr. Artine.

We sat waiting for Lieutenant Van Coppanolle to come; we waited for hours, and he had not yet got through when the order came to start. Captain Arlabose would stay to remove the guards from the empty hospitals after Lieutenant Van Coppanolle got back from the Latin Church. With trembling hearts we stumbled out into the darkness. This was at 10.30 P.M.; February 10.

It was difficult going as soon as we left the buildings behind us, for the darkness blinded us and we did not follow the road, but went across rough fields, guided by hundreds of other marchers as lost as we were. We were not taking the long road to Aleppo, but were to strike out over the mountains in an attempt to reach Islahieh.

We had stumbled along silently up hills and down into valleys for perhaps two hours, when we ran into Lieutenant Van Coppanolle, gay as ever. He had taken shorter way and his company was ahead. A young Armenian girl was with him from the Latin Church, and he immediately put her under my wing and took charge of us both. The moon was rising, and by its light we struck straight for the big camp, reaching it in a few minutes.

Such a night! A turquoise sky flooded with moonlight over a white world, and across the snow, stretching as far as the eye could see, a line of camp fires, horses, wagons, camp fires, soldiers, refugees, camp fires, camels, donkeys, carts, all a mixture and confusion of sound and sight. We sat down to rest by a fire of straw, and got colder and colder. The poor soldiers kept coming with their frozen, wet feet to get a taste of the fire, which was hardly warmer than candlelight. One the great relief of news that Miss Buckley was alive, and staying in Marash. We had brought rested less than three-quarters of an hour when the order came to march. We did not stop again until late the next morning, and by that time we had begun to pass children and some women dropping in the snow, unable to go on.

girl) and I worked over them and tried to save them. One little girl I especially remember, one of the most sweetly pretty little girls I have ever seen. She was about four years old. We picked her up and got her on a horse. But I have no hope that any of those who had fallen so soon ever got through.

Just at dawn, who should I recognize but Vartan, walking! In the confusion of the night, he said, the donkey had got away from them, carrying all their food and bedding. He insisted that he was all right, but his wife and children were hungry. And there in that desolation of grey dawn on bleak mountains, as he dragged the wounded leg through the snow, he looked at me and said, "The Turks burned my house. If we had got the farm, they could not have burned that, could they? I always wanted a farm.'

A few hours later we sat down in a place somewhat sheltered from the wind. It was very cold. Lieutenant Van Coppanolle gave us food, and I could have eaten with relish, though the chicken and bread were so frozen that bits of ice crackled between our teeth when we bit them. But there were three people dying within a few feet of us, and one was a mother with a little boy not more than seven years old, who kept trying to arouse her. He was so weak himself that he could not make much of a sound, but he whispered, "Mamma! Mamma!" tearing her dress open and beating at her breast with his hands. She kept making an effort, half rising and

## THE 22 DAYS OF MARASH

trying to smile at him, and then falling back, while he whispered, "Mamma! Mamma! frantically. The Lieutenant insisted that I eat, but I could not swallow, and when he was not looking I gave some of the food away and put the rest in my pocket for Vartan's family. Two pieces of chicken and a little bread — and hundreds all about us with nothing.

Our line was wholly demoralized; some stopping to rest, others trudging on. As they passed, I kept asking for Dr. Artine. No one had heard of him. This I thought, is the way Armenian families are broken up. This is the way they tramp the roads of Turkey, asking for news of each other. I am a refugee. This is what it means. If I had been born in Marash instead of in America, all that I know, all that I am, would not keep me from this; hunger and cold and heartache, refugee camps and lines of refugees, bread lines, dirt, disease. Why should I wish and pray that Dr. Artine escape alive? It would be easier for him to be killed by the Turks.

We rested for half an hour, then on again, with no pause and no more food until we reached El Oghlou at three o'clock that afternoon. All the way Lieutenant Van Coppanolle urged me to ride; I could have had a horse or a place in a wagon. But I was not so tired as the soldiers, and very much more fit than any of the thousands of Armenian women and children.

We slept in a mud house that night, after eating a good meal of beef from a cow that the soldiers had picked up on the way. At five in the morning we were on the march again. The weather was warmer, and our spirits lighter. If the weather would be kind for only two days more, we could all reach Islahieh safely.

All that day we went forward, in good spirits. From the top of a mountain the sight of that column was one never to be forgotten. Four battalions with their guns, provisions, pack-mules and a train of three hundred camels, and behind that, a stream of refugees going up and down the hills into the far, blue distance. All seemed to be moving in good order; no more were falling by the road. The clear sky was like God's visible blessing.

That night we camped at Bel-Punar. There was a good supper, a roasting fire, and we dropped to sleep with the comforting thought, "Only one more day to Islahieh." At five o'clock, in the darkness, Lieutenant Van Coppanolle waked me and said we must start at once; there was a blizzard.

The swirling snow was so thick that we could see only a few feet, and that with difficulty. Four thousand men were trying to get into line, more than five thousand refugees were struggling in the confusion and terror. Screams of horses, shrieks of women who could not find their children, wails of children wallowing in the snow alone, creaking of gun-carriages, shouts of officers and men, sudden looking up of camels that grunted and bit, all coming out of a swirling whiteness. I thought of my nurses, of Vartan and his family, of my patients from the hospital, women with new-born babies, struggling in that madness. Impossible to find any one, to do anything. We got somehow into the frantic line and started on the long tramp. It lasted fourteen hours.

We had been obliged to start without even a cup of coffee, but both La Petite and I were well wrapped up, and our good comrade was always beside us, caring for us with such tenderness. I knew what heroism is, seeing Lieutenant Van Coppanolle and La Petite trudging bravely, without complaint. In a very few hours, we were passing the dying all along the way.

The column was quite quiet. There was hardly a sound for hours, except the scream of some one falling. Always, I just when endurance broke, they screamed once as they fell. The column went on silently, leaving them there.

Armenian women have a way of carrying their children on their backs, holding the two hands clutched against the mother's breast and the child's weight on the bent back. When children are carried in this way, almost always one sees their little bare feet, side by side. Working with refugees, I see this perhaps a hundred times a day, and never without remembering the road to Islahieh. Even now I cannot bear to see children's feet; I cover them up whenever I have time and can reach them.

That morning we passed hundreds of mothers, carrying their children in this way. First a vague darkness in the swirling snow, then the mother's bent body, and the child's little bare feet. I would reach out and tuck them up in a corner of shawl or blanket as I went by. I do not know how many hours we had been walking, when I found the first dead child on its mother's back. I walked beside her, examining it; she trudged on, bent under the weight, doggedly lifting one foot and then the other through the snow, blind and deaf to everything. The child was certainly dead, and she did not know it. I spoke to her, finally shook her arm violently to arouse her. When she looked up I pointed to the child and said, "Finish". The mother seemed not to understand at first, trudged onward for a few steps, and then let go the child's hands. The body fell, and the mother went on, blind and deaf as before, all her life in that lifting of one foot after the other through the snow.

This was the first one. There were perhaps fifty more after that, always the same. No complaint, no protest, a little time to understand what had happened, and then a dumb letting go of the hands and the weight. Strength was so exhausted in these women who had carried their children so far, that there was no emotion left, simply the last shreds of animal endurance. If I had not spoken to them, they would have carried the dead in the snow.

In time I, too, was a blind machine moving forward, tucking in no more feet, examining no more children. We had been walking ten hours, and I was probably one of the most fortunate of the thousands of women who followed the French out of Marash. I had more reserve strength on which to draw. Still, there was little of it left in the end. I thought of nothing, cared for nothing, simply struggled onward and tried to keep my balance. It seemed to me that we three were walking on a very narrow ledge between two precipices, and that if I lost my balance and fell we would all go down thousands of feet.

Just in front of us was a cart; one of the women in it had died and the body, caught by the feet dragged in the snow. I saw it dragging in front of us for mile; I looked at it dully, and avoided stepping on it. No one thought any more about it than that. If it had been taken out of the cart, there would have been room for some living person, but no one thought of that. Then the cart was not there. I do not know what became of it. We may have gone around it. Nothing existed but that narrow bit of solidity in the white whirl, the solidity on which we tried to keep our balance. Often and often it turned to broken ice and water; we had come to a revir, and I was picked up and carried across.

I had felt hands plucking at my shoulder, stiffly fumbling at me and sliding and fumbling; it seemed to me that I had felt them for a long time, when I heard a voice saying, "Doctori Doctbr, what shall I do?" I turned then, and there was

Margaret, one of our nurses, just behind me. She stood there holding out her hands, stiff like dead claws with the cold, and looked at me with wild eyes. Her clothes, wet in the rivers, had frozen, the shawl on her head had blown back and stood out in stiff icy folds. "Doctor, what shall I do?" I'm dying. I can't go on."

"Nonsense!" I said. "Of course you can go on. Come now. I won't hear another word! *Marchi*!"

We went on, repeating this, I walking carefully on the narrow ledge and she fumbling, trying to get hold of my shoulder. "No doctor, I can't. Oh, doctor, I'm dying. Oh, doctor, what shall I do?"

"March. You can. You must."

"Oh, doctor..."

After a long time her hands slid down my arm and I stopped to try to pick her up. Lieutenant Van Coppanolle said, "Who is she?"

"One of our nurses."

"Here, get that girl on her feet and bring her through," he said to his orderly. "Give her this to eat." He gave the orderly a piece of chocolate. Then we went on, hearing little querulous complaining behind us. The orderly had got her on her feet, but they could not walk. He had not the strength to hold her up. He could not break the chocolate, and she could not bite it. "I have a piece in her mouth, my lieutenant," he said, "but she can't swallow."

"Get her through, get her through. She's one of the doctor's nurses."

Perhaps I had dwell too long upon these personal experiences. Personal experience is the only window through which we see the world, and if I share the window with others, it is to show the same view beyond. The things I felt and saw, multiplied by thousands, made up the experiences of the column that crawled from Bel-Punar toward Islahieh when the French evacuated Marash. This was something, a very tiny fractional part, of the price the Armenians of Turkey paid, and are still paying, for the mistakes and quarrels of the Allies since 1918. Statistics are mathematics, and political discussion is an academic thing. But the men and women and children who lived through the massacres at Marash and walked to Islahieh are flesh and blood. And what they saw and suffered then they are still seeing and suffering, in other forms, in other places.

It was late in the afternoon of February 13, 1920, that the men and women in this column, silently using their last strength to fight through the blizzard over the mountains, found that they were not on the road to Islahieh and did not know where it was.

What were the statesmen of England and France doing at that hour? Comfortable men, men who had eaten, men who had roofs under which to sleep, men whose wives and children were safe and warm—they sat playing the great game of international politics on the chessboard of the world, while the world bled lives and sweated anguish at every move.

It is simple enough to blame the Turk for the sufferings of Armenians. Seeing what the Turk does, one hates him. But what is the Turk? A man who thinks first of his own profit, a nation that fights for its own interests as it sees them. Yes; the Turk is a barbarian; he still does crudely with bayonets and massacres what the civilized nations have learned to do with secret agreements and treaties signed at council tables. The Turk is a barbarian; in seven hundred years he has learned



nothing from the civilization of Christian Europe. But what are the lessons that Christian Europe has set him to learn?

Seven hundred years ago the Crusaders took Jerusalem in the name of Christ and looted it of gold and silver and rugs and women, while their horses' legs were drenched to the knees in blood. After seven centuries, General Allenby re-takes Jerusalem. All that to quarrel over loot of oil-wells, and railway routes, and new territory until the Turk rises and drenches Asia Minor with the blood of their soldiers and their helpless tools and dupes, the Armenians. There may have been blood-stains on the rugs the Christian knights carried home to France and England. Today, the blood is on the Turks' bayonet; blood-stains are invisible on the signed pieces of paper, safe and clean in Downing Street or on the Quai 'Orsay.

We were lost, and now the silence began to be broken by low murmurs of talk the French officers consulting as to what we should do. The column still staggered on, blindly. After thirteen hours of marching without food or rest, eyes baffled by the shirling snow, feet weighted with the fallen snow, there was nothing left in us but mechanical endurance. We continued to move, as a dead snake moves, because there was still a little life in our muscles that would not let go. The cries of the falling were weaker now, and more huddled bodies lay in the snow to be stumbled over. The officers were talking, in a group beside the column. Lieutenant Van Coppanolle stopped; all our little group stopped. I could still stand alone, La Petite holding to my arm but trying not to lean her weight on it. My nurse went down, and the orderly reeled, leaning over, slapping her, shaking her, helping her in her struggles to get up.

Then Lieutenant Van Coppanolle laughed. The other officers had said there was nothing to do but camp for the night; we were lost, and in the darkness it was impossible to find the road. It was then that the Lieutenant laughed, gaily, as at a delightful joke. We were all right, he said; we might be a little way off the road, but we'd find it again. Allons!

There is no miracle like a brave man's laughter in the midst of death. Our hearts had stopped at that suggestion of camping in the snow. It meant, of course, that thousands of us would lie down and never get up again. But the temptation of it! Just to lie down, and let the snow cover us, and give up all effort for ever. Then Lieutenant Van Coppanolle laughed, not defiantly, not even encouragingly, but with the simple mirth of a gay and serene spirit laughing away an amusing suggestion. Allons

It was the one thing that could have kept us going. We went on. It was quite dark now, so dark that we could no longer see the snow, could only feel it brushing our faces and weighting our feet. It was so dark that we stepped on the dying, unable to see them.

We had been going on thus blindly in the darkness for perhaps an hour longer, when the Lieutenant himself suggested that we stop. He spoke of it not too seriously, not as though it meant what we all knew it did mean. But he was speaking of it, when we heard a high, long whistle. The whole column—thousands of throats—answered it with a terrible sob. A train whistle! *Islahieh!*

There were some who began trying to run toward it. In the darkness there were screams, groans, calls of those suddenly separated in the mob. The last half-mile was nightmare confusion added to nightmare exhaustion, and in that last

half-mile, I think, more people dropped and died than in any of the miles we had toiled over. We came to buildings and lights, a sobbing frantic crowd. Some one found us in it, and said that our company was to go the barracks on the hill. We came upon a kitchen wagon and greedily drank cups of cold, icy coffee. No warmth if Lieutenant Van Coppanolle had not been unconquerable. La Petite and I could

Hundreds of the refugees died in Islahieh. What it must have been to them, the thousands who poured down on the little station to find no shelter and to be helped by no last heroic efforts of exhausted men, I do not want to try to imagine. We, with the barracks waiting for us, would have died on the hill that led to them, if Lieutenant Van Coppanolle had not been unconquerable. La Petite and I could go no farther. It was a hill to climb, in waist-deep snow.

A riderless, lost horse came out of the darkness, and the Lieutenant and his orderly got us on it. The orderly kept falling, and the Lieutenant could get him up a again only with kicks and curses. La Petite and I swayed on the horse's back; all my last strength went in holding on and in encouraging her to do so. Finally she could keep her balance no longer, and in that last extremity the poor, brave, little thing let go, rather than drag me off with her. These are things you do not forget, when people speak scornfully of the Armenians.

A second later, the orderly, the horse and I went down, rolling in the snow. Lieutenant Van Coppanolle got us the rest of the way by himself, dragging us through the snow, beating the orderly with his fists, falling himself and struggling onward on his knees. So we got to the barracks at last.

I lay on a bunk in the officer's mess, soldiers rubbing my feet and hands, an officer feeding me hot toddy with a spoon, and saw the French officers coming in. One had gone mad and was raving and fighting, when they carried him away. One fell on his face and lay there until he was picked up. All of them were crippled with frozen and frost-bitten feet, and in the last stages of exhaustion.

Five thousand Armenians had left Marash, and perhaps a third of them lived to reach Islahieh. That was in February, 1920. To understand the lives of these Armenians, remember that the evacuation of Marash was not an isolated calamity interrupting comfort and peace, like the San Francisco fire or the Galveston flood. These people had lived through the massacres and deportations in Turkey during the war; for six years they had been suffering and dying as they suffered and died on the road to Islahieh. It was those few months of anxious peace in Marash that was the novelty to them; those few months of patiently beginning again to rebuild ruined houses and broken lives. And the evacuation of Marash was the beginning of the old story again—the beginning of the wanderings and sufferings which are not ended yet. For those who lived to reach Islahieh went on to Smyrna, and Ismid, and the villages of Anatolia that were held by the Greeks, and the power of new Turkey was rising behind them like a hurricane.

#### FOOTNOTES TO DR. ELLIOTT

(1) Mabel Evelyn Elliott. *Beginning Again at Ararat*. New York (Ravell) , 1924.

(2) Grace N. Kimball, "An Appreccation", in Elliott, op. cit., p. 7.

(3) Elliott, op. cit., p. 9.

(4) Ibid, pp. 98-114.

(5) Ibid, pp. 115-131.

(6) Ibid, pp. 83-97.

(7) Ibid, p. 84.

(8) Ibid, p. 86. -- The question of British responsibility in this issue remains unresolved. Dr. Ghazarian's account (see ahead) reports in fact that the Turks bore some English arms, but this may not represent sinecure proof that the French charges were wholly or even in part substantiated. The Turkish insurgents in Marash are known to have had also German-made and Turkish rifles and equipment. The best guess is that the Kemalist forces in Marash were being supplied by Kemalist gun-runners. The Turkish forces in Marash are known never to have been short of weapons and other materials of war. This would mean that a steady stream of weapons was reaching the city.

(9) Ibid, pp. 86-87.

(10) Ibid, 96-97.

(11) American nurses at the American Hospital in Marash.

(12) "Mr. Kerr" is of course Dr. Stanley E. Kerr, on whom see the Editorial Prefatory of this compilation. Dr. (Paul) Snyder was an American missionary stationed in Marash.

(13) Dr. Marion C. Wilson, a physician at the American Hospital.

(14) Frances Buckley, an American Red Cross nurse.

(15) Mrs. Mabel Power, Near East Relief nurse.

(16) More properly, Dr. Harutune Harutunian, an Armenian physician and member of the American Hospital staff.

(17) Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol, American High Commissioner in Constantinople. He has been accused of sympathy for the Kemalist movement.

(18) The Reverend James K. Lyman.

(19) Helen Shultz, Near East Relief nurse.

(20) Minnie Dougherty, a Near East Relief nurse; Dr. C. F. H. Crathern, America YMCA secretary.

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## II. Extracts from the Account of Dr. Harutune Der Ghazarian

ON NOVEMBER 29, 1919, Mr. Andre, (1) the governor of Jebel-i-Bereket, visited Marash and gave the Turks the impression that the French would deal mildly with them. So a crowd of about 1000 Turks took heart and climbed the hill where, despite Andre's orders, they pulled up the Turkish flag. This incident triggered the events starting with the January 21 events. (3)

After the British evacuation of Marash and the arrival of the French, a group of seven Turkish leaders left Marash for Albistan where they contacted Kemal's people and started propagandizing the Turks of Marash. These people set up their offices in Pazarjukh, six hours distant from Marash. The place was soon occupied by the Tchetehs of the Kemalist leader Ali Reza.

These Turks sent a wire protesting the coming of the French. Guns were run in from Aintab and the Tchetehts started operations against the French in Marash, who were warned by the local Armenians that dangerous days rested ahead. But the French were indifferent.

The Armenian village of Jamestel, one hour away from the city, was the first Armenian community in the area to be hit by the Tchetehts. Six people were killed, and 250 Armenians from other villages in the area fled to Marash where, at this time, there were 3,000 French troops under the orders of Ordon. (4)

A few days later, the tumults disfiguring the suburbs of Marash reached the city itself. Those Armenians who were living in those Marash wards of mixed content converged on the Armenian quarters. Streets in the Turkish wards were barricaded. The Armenian National Union asked the French commander to protect the Armenians or, at least, to give them 1,000 or 500 rifles for self-defensive use. The French officer assured them that the Turks would not dare attack the Armenians, and that he could, within two hours, beat off any such onslaught.

At this time, General Qu  rette, the overall commander in Marash, Aintab, and Urfa, arrived in Marash with some Turkish notables for consultation with the local authorities. The Turks demanded that the city be evacuated as soon as possible. Acting Mutasherrif Jevdet Bey announced that the Turks would not accept French control, that a large force of Tchetehts was poised to seize the city and should this happen the whole town would become a charnel house.

Finally, on January 18, 1920, the Turks handed the French authority a memorandum of protest containing seven articles: the French would have to go, was the gist of the note. At the same time, the Turks invited the Armenians to join them in a struggle against the French. A number of meetings ensued in the municipal center at which the Turks revealed that they knew about the French force at Bel-Punar. They demanded that the Armenians at least remain neutral in the struggle.

On January 19, Armenian and Christian stores remained closed to business. On the following day, the Turks too did not open their stores. There were demonstrations before the municipal center.

On January 21, the General told the Turks of the French arrangements. Commandant Morbion would be the "Comptroller", that is, governor of the city, and the like. Jevdet turned down the French categorically.

The General gave the Turks 24 hours to comply. At 1p.m., January 21, the General told the Turks that under agreements made with the Turkish government at Constantinople, the French had all right to occupy the city. Jevdet rejected this, saying this was against the wishes of the Turks. The General thereupon immediately placed the Turks under house arrest, letting go however the Turkish intellectuals and police officers who were members of the Turkish deputation.

At this, the Turkish population, already prepared for such an act, started arming personnel who were with them patrolling the city...when the Armenians saw this tepid attitude of the French, they took all caution...

Precisely because of this French attitude, 3,000 Armenians of Bektoutyeh, Chavoushlou, Kayishli, Loulageh Kourtlou, devejili, Chishekli and Seksenler were victimized.

On the fifth day of the crisis, the sons of Bayazid Sade Shukri and Kadir Pasha put the Armenians to the sword. A few escaped and told us what had happened. The grim work had been done by 3-400 Tchetehts, supported by local Circassians and Kurds from those villages, all attired in Kemalist garb and all bearing sharply honed sabers and German mausers.

The French had concentrated their force in the northwest of Marash and the rest of the city, being unprotected, was under control of the Tchetehts who, reinforced by 200 newcomers, soon were 5-600 strong, in the city itself. Some days before the Turkish insurrection, the French had thus deployed their forces: 80 soldiers at the American hospital, 110 Armenian Legionnaires at St. Sarkis' Church, 280 at the First Protestant Church, 40 at the Armenian Catholic Church, 50 at St. Gregory's Church, 150 Algerians at the Latin Monastery, 1200 Armenian Legionnaires at the Armory and 100 at St. Astvadzadzin Church, 150 at the Second Protestant Church, 1500 Senegalese and Armenian Legionnaires at the Church of the 40 Sainted Soldiers, to the north of the city.

Early in the morning of January 21, the day the struggle started, the Armenian Legionnaires had left for Bel-Punar. Taking advantage of their absence from the city, the Turks immediately attacked the Armenian population that had massed in their areas of defense. (5) The Turks set fire to all the Turkish houses in the place so that the fire would spread to the Armenian wards. They doused the houses with oil and the breeze spread the fire everywhere. The Armenians were forced to tear down their own houses so as to create a fire-break.

On the seventh day, most houses were already in ruins and the Armenian quarter had the appearance of an island in a burned down wilderness. Many Turks whose homes had been destroyed moved into Armenian houses. There were almost 3,000 Armenians crowded into St. Gregory's and St. Astvadzadzin's churches. Each church was defended by twenty Armenian Legionnaires and they were able to hold out for 20 days. They asked for supplies, but the commanding officer refused them and ordered everyone out of the areas. When this was made known to the people, 1,500 of them, led by some Legionnaires, moved unobserved through the Turkish ward and reached The Church of the 40 Sainted Soldiers, where there were Senegalese soldiers. As the people were approaching the church they started shouting "Armen, Armen", but they were nevertheless met by heavy rifle fire and about 400 innocent Armenians fell.

On the next day, learning of the arrival at the Church of 40 Sainted Soldiers of the Armenians, the Turks tightened their cordon around the area. Seven Legionnaires were killed; the thirteen others fought their way to the armory where they were given 50 bullets and grenades each. The Turks then attacked the area of the church and mercilessly slaughtered the Armenians. About 800 were able to get to the Church itself. The Turks finally reached the stone church by island-hopping through the neighboring buildings. They broke through the roof of the edifice, spread gasoline all around and set fire to the building. The roof burst into flame and finally caved in, burning a part of the people in the flaming debris. Those who survived this were incinerated...and all this before the very eyes of the 1500 French soldiers at the Church of the 40 Sainted Soldiers.

The Turks now had three field cannon and as many mortars, which they directed on the American orphanage, the armory and St. Gregory's Church. These

were attacked in military order. The assailants bore German and Turkish rifles, as well as some English pirces. And they were obviously well supplied with ammunition.

**Armenian-French Relations During the Crisis:** The French were ill-informed as to the strategic routes through the city, but this lack of intelligence was filled by the Armenians who gave the French all assistance in this regard. When the Turkish massacres reached the city, the Armenians suggested that all Turkish houses ought to be burned down. The French turned down this advice. On the other hand, they ordered the Turkish houses in the vicinity of the Catholic Church and the Beyt Shalom Orphanage to be torched. At all times, without regard to their own personal safety, the Armenians also helped supply the French with provisions. The 3,000-man French force could have been victorious if an attempt were to have been made to take the city. But the French made no such attempt...

On the twelfth day, the Turks attacked the Armenians especially in the vicinity of the American Orphanage. The Armenians resisted and the Turks paid dearly. Until the sixteenth day, the opposing forces were of equal strength. On the morning of that same day, the attacking Turks withdrew, leaving behind circulars and messages. A French aircraft overflew the city for about one-half an hour before vanishing over the horizon.

On the next day, the Turkish population started fleeing the city. On the seventh day, a new French force appeared before the city and camped there without doing a thing. The Turks were in a panic and their exodus continued. But the situation changed almost overnight. And here is what happened.

On the nineteenth day, the French relief force outside the city started shelling the town. French troops were soon positioned on St. Toros hill, which commanded the city. After placing their cannon there, the French moved to the armory where General Quérette's unit was located. This infiltration was done silently. A little later, the Turks recommenced firing. It became apparent that the Turks were evacuating their people to the nearby villages, that they were discouraged...but they were in the meantime plundering the vacant Armenian houses. What Turkish fighters still in the city were using hunting pieces loaded with metal shot.

On January 19, Colonel Normand and General Quérette ordered all French military personnel in the Armenian wards to gather at a chosen place. The Armenians sensed that this was a harbinger of French surrender and they didn't like it at all. When the Armenians asked the French command the reasons for such a muster, they were told that the move was designed to prepare for a major attack on the Turks.

The Armenians believed what they were told since they knew that a part of the Tcheteys and the Turkish population was leaving the city. Despite the fact that the Turkish exodus meant that the Armenians and the French could move out and seize without opposition many choice positions in the city, despite the fact that the Turks had broken out white surrender flags, despite the fact that the Turks had given word that they would surrender, the French suddenly announced that there would be a withdrawal from the city and they would consign the Armenians to American protection. When the Turks got wind of this, they said they were pleased with the arrangement and promised no new crisis should the French pull out.

Dr. Mustafa, the Ittihadist-Kemalist leader, had been one of those who had

fled to Albistan with the arrival of the French. The French announcement gave new hope to Dr. Mustafa; and that news quickly spread among the Turks and orders were given for the Tchetehs in the villages to regroup. Unaware of all this, the Armenians busied themselves in trying to find missing members of their families. When, however, the Armenians saw the French troops leaving the American Orphanage, they knew they were being abandoned to their own fate. And when they saw the Turkish flag flying over the armory, they knew that they had either to defend themselves or else to follow the French forces out of the city.

The first to decide to leave with the French were the 3,000 Armenians in the Protestant Church. They left via the El-Oghlou road in the dead of night but were slaughtered almost to the last soul by a lurking Tchetehe force. Only twenty-seven of this refugee column were saved. It is to be noted that the French military column had left the city about one hour before the departure of the refugee column, and that the Turks were well aware that the Armenians were unprotected. The fate of the Armenians had been sealed...

**The French Keep Their Surrender a Secret:** When, on the night of February 8, the French forces in the city were mustered together, the Armenians asked the French why they were so acting and were told that it was all a simple military maneuver. Messengers were even sent to all the Armenian wards bidding the people stay in their houses or they would be shot. In their innocence, the Armenians were content that what was taking place was indeed of little immediate concern to them. On the other hand, the Turks were well aware of everything.

The French had adequate supplies of all materiel. After Colonel Normand arrived in Marash, the French expended only about 200 shells. The French force numbered 3,000 soldiers, 100 machineguns, mounted automatic weapons, four 65 mm's, eight 37mm's, and other heavier weapons. If the French had wished, they could have beaten back all attacks and even mounted a successful counter-offensive of their own. But they remained on the defensive until the end.

**No Shortage of Food and Supplies:** The 3,000 French soldiers of whom about 1,200 were stationed in the churches and nearby public houses, were near the marketplace and could buy whatever they needed in all quantity they desired—rice, sugar, butter, sausages, halveh, (6) raisins. All these commodities were comparatively abundant—so much so that before the French left, they handed over to the Armenians great quantities of stores.

**On The Surrender Road:** The departing French troops with their Armenian refugee charges reached El-Oghlou where the French requisitioned for themselves all the houses in the town, leaving the Armenians out in the open. Over the next two days of the ghastly trek, especially over the last day, hundreds of Armenians died in the deep snows and the freeze despite the efforts of the Armenian Legionnaires. Up to the arrival at Ishahieh, more than 1,200 Armenians thus perished...on the Surrender Road.

**Marash's Armenian Population:** Without counting the residents of the forty-six Armenian villages in the vicinity of Marash, the city itself had in 1920 22,000 Armenians, of whom about 5,000 lost their lives during the twenty-days of fighting or its immediate aftermath. 3,000 left with the French force, while 14,000 remained in Marash. A Turkish wire a while later reported that there were 8,500 Armenians left in the city...(7)

## FOOTNOTES TO DR. DER GHAZARIAN

(1) Dr. Der Ghazarian, a prominent leader of the Marash Armenian community, was a native of Marash. After graduation from St. Paul's American College, Tarsus, Cilicia, he studied at the Physician's College of Beirut, and returning to Marash, became a member of the staff of the German Hospital. He was also appointed Chief Physician of the Turkish military in the city. He later practiced and studied in Frankfurt, Germany, went back to Marash and was a member of the Armenian National Union during the tumults. He underwent the evacuation ordeal and later practiced his profession in Aleppo. Dr. Ghazarian was a well-known author and historian. This section is based on extracts from a more comprehensive account as it appeared in pp. 813-818 of the Kalustian work. See also *Bahag*, (Boston), issue of June 6, 1920.

(2) The reference is obviously to *Captain* André, on whom see the Prefatory of this group. He was the civil-governor of Marash for a brief time.

(3) The controversial "Flag Incident", on which see the Prefatory.

(4) Major Rose de Ordons.

(5) Another of the exasperating insolubles of the Marash affair. The Armenian Legionnaires arrived in Marash apparently on January 19 after a forced march from El-Punar. Two days after their arrival, the group was ordered back to Islahieh! At El-Punar, each Legionnaire was given fifty rounds of ammunition, after which the detachment was ordered to proceed to El-Oghlu. The next morning, they left for Marash. When they were one hour from the city, the soldiers observed the city ablaze. Attacks by Tchetehts ensued. The force of about 150 men had to face a Turkish concentration of about 2,000. Fighting all the way for twelve hours, the Legionnaires finally stood directly outside of the city, where they were halted for five hours. They finally fought their way into the city and were positioned at the Church of the Forty Sainted Soldiers. No one has yet explained why this detachment was ordered out of Marash in the first place. It is clear however that the movement encouraged the Turks to attack on January 21... On this see Krikor Ajemian, "Etcher marashi Grivneren", in *Gamavor*, 1928, a work published by the Cairo Armenian Legion Union, Extracts are found in Kalustian, op. cit. pp. 818-820.

(6) A confection made of crushed, oiled sesame seeds.

(7) By January, 1923, the city had been cleared of all its Armenian residents. See Kerr, op. cit., p. xvi, Preface.



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# The 22 Days of Marash: Papers on the Defense of the City Against Turkish Forces Jan.—Feb., 1920

## PART III

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### A DIARY OF THE EVENTS IN MARASH

GHEVONT CHORBAGIAN

*Translation by Nishan Der Bedrosyan*

#### NOTE

*THIS INVALUABLE DIURNAL ACCOUNT of events in the city of Marash which the **Review** [vol. xxx, no. 4[120], Winter, 1977 and volume xxx1, no. 1[121] and presently place under discussion, was written originally in the Armenian by Mr. Ghevont Chorbajian so that his brother Dikran might "read it and weep for the ruins of our fatherland. May the nation that wrought such evils on us be subjected to even greater disaster". It was subsequently translated into English by Nishan Der Bedrosyan, of Manasquan, New Jersey, and appears herewith in the **Review** in its first publication in any language through the courtesy of Mr. Alvin Bedrosian, of Long Branch, New Jersey. — Ghevont Chorbajian was born 1896 in Marash, received his early education there and studied at the French Boarding School in Adana which was later, in the fall of 1914, to be confiscated by the Turkish authorities. He was drafted in 1915 into the Turkish army "while they were deporting my father and mother" and, in 1916, was sent to the military camp at Baalbek where, one year later, he was commissioned a reserve officer. He adds, "Near the end of 1919, most of the survivors of the holocaust, including my family, were sent back to Marash by French occupation authorities, unfortunately once again to face Turkish Kemalist atrocities which took place right under the nose of the French military force." He was an eyewitness of those events. Mr. Chorbajian is presently a resident of Los Angeles, California. — The editors point out that little attempt has been made to "sophisticate" Mr. Chorbajian's language, which stands on its own virtues as a valuable example of oral history.*

*January 20, 1920, Tuesday, the second day of Christmas:* The commander of the French forces in Marash, Colonel Querette, delivered an ultimatum to the Turkish government, demanding the surrender of the government house and the citadel within 24 hours. This ultimatum worsened the condition of the city; the stores of the Armenians and of the denominations were already closed because of the Christmas holiday, and the Turks also closed all their stores, as a sign of mourning. Already there was no doubt that a storm would break out, the political atmosphere had become very gloomy; it was apparent that blood would flow again in this cursed city; but who would suffer, the Armenian or the Turk? We were very hopeful that, this time around, the sufferers would be the Turks. The Shopkalis' (1) ...presence, our only hope...

*January 21, 1920, Wednesday. — The first day of the war:*

Yesterday's condition acquired a graver nature. Despite the fact that the Christmas holiday was over, the Armenians had stubbornly opened their stores; likewise, the Turks. Everyone was anxiously awaiting the response to the ultimatum; it would expire at two o'clock in the afternoon. Is it possible that the Turks were willing to satisfy the demands of the French? We were hoping that they would.

But the Turks' furtive preparations and our Shapkalis' entirely unconcerned behavior caused us dread and consternation. Since the occupation of Marash by the French, the Turks' predispositions and the possibilities that some day they would cunningly wreak a disaster on them, was predicted by the Armenians, and accordingly reported to the French by the day and by the hour. In response to these efforts, our idolized French, instead of taking adequate counter measures, would laugh at us, and would not take the Turk seriously.

On the prescribed hour, the vice-governor of Marash, Jevdet Bey, accompanied by eight noted Turks, called on the general and delivered the following reply: "Mr. General, the people have succumbed to anarchy; they don't listen to us. The *Millijis* (2) (namely, a metonym for the old Ittihadists) never intend to satisfy your demands. Accordingly, they declare that the general is free to wrest the control of the government house and the citadel by any means he chooses."

Before the delegates had taken their leave of the general, the Turkish gendarmes in the citadel fired three rounds of their Mauser rifles; this was simply a signal informing all the Turks in the city, that the war against the French had begun. This warning was followed by interminable fusillades by the Turkish side on the French positions and Armenian houses. On the same day the French had 4000 troops, plentiful ammunition, which were stored in ample quantities in the following buildings: the Armory, American institutions, the Latin Catholic monastery, the Armenian Catholic St. Savior Church, the First Church of the Armenian Protestants, St. Sarkis church, Beit Shalom or the old German orphanage, the Church of Forty Sainted Soldiers and the nearly 4-5 inns (Khans). A number of soldiers were also stationed in St. George and St. Asdvadzadzin

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(1) Translator's note: Literally, a Turkish word meaning "hat-wearers" — Europeans by implication.

(2) The nationalists.

churches. At the very first moment of the war, each soldier and each Armenian was obliged to remain wherever he happened to be, since to venture outside had become impossible, because of the bullets falling hail-like all around. Consequently, the French troops remained separated in their various positions, and were unaware of one another's condition: even many of the French soldiers on joint patrol duty with Turkish gendarmes in bazaars and streets, were dastardly slain by their Turkish colleagues.

The Turkish delegates who were still with the general, were interned in his quarters. The fusillades lasted until the evening; also at times during the night.

*January 22, 1920, Thursday. — Second day.*

Early in the morning there began a fusillade that equalled in intensity that of yesterday's, and continued until the evening. Sometimes the roar of French cannons surpassed that of the rifles. The bullets that the Turks fired were all German poisonous dum-dums, whose wounds would never heal. Tonight was a repeat of last night.

*January 23, 1920, Friday. — The third day.*

The French, isolated in their several position, would never take the offensive; they always maintained a defensive posture. But the Turks, fortified in their earthen and stone single story houses, were awaiting to see what the French position would be vis-à-vis them, in order to determine their own options; nevertheless, their fusillades never ceased. The conduct of the Turks was such that it was assumed that they were well organized; and that the leaders of this affair were able officers, who had served in the Turkish army, and taken part in the general war (the First World War). The Turks understood that the French had no intention of attacking them, so they started to attack unarmed Armenian houses, to plunder, to set a fire, and to massacre the captured Armenians.

They first attacked the Armenians of St. Stephen's parish, because this was the weakest section of the Armenians, although armed Armenians put up some resistance, but as their cartridges were exhausted, they themselves set their own houses afire, some of them dying in the flames, and others falling victims to the Turkish *yataghan*.

In this area, a number of Armenians, believing in the promises of a Turkish bey, surrendered, and others evaded, taking advantage of the dark of the night, took refuge in the Latin monastery, and yet others, in the American college.

*January 24, 1920, Saturday. — The fourth day.*

The Turks' offensive continued, and why should it not? Since there was no opposition to them. The French, furthermore, at the sight of those who had perilously escaped in miserable conditions from the massacre and sought refuge in their garrisons, and many other Armenians, wounded by the Turkish saber and still bleeding, from both sexes and all ages, would not commiserate or pity them. They were not even thinking about putting an end to such happenings. The Turks, taking heart at the mysterious silence of the French, yesterday subjected the completely defenseless parish of St. Garabed (Akr-Dereh) to its somber destiny: they entered the Armenian houses and plundered the massacred, the occupants, and set them afire; but those who escaped the massacre, took refuge in the American college during the night.

*January 25, 1920, Sunday. — The fifth day.*

As you already know, there is almost no ward in Marash that is inhabited exclusively by Armenians; but all the wards are intermixed with Turks. In this respect Marash is a unique city; although Kmpet and Kouyoumjak are the wards mostly populated by Armenians, they are surrounded by Turkish wards. the ward of Kmpet or the parish of St. Sarkis, long since had become a thorn in the flesh of the Turks; many Turks even called this ward "Little Zeitum"; they all shied away from this ward, and similarly, later, they were apprehensive of Kouyoumjak. The Turks privately used to say that, when the opportunity presented itself, "we will completely demolish these two wards".

True to their promise, beginning with the very first day of the war, they besieged these two wards and later assaulted them; and after five days of continuous heroic resistance, "during which time although the Turks suffered much losses, they never thought of abandoning their offensive". Armenians were obliged to evacuate these two wards; if they had persisted in remaining in their positions, they would all have been consumed by fire, because the Turks, perceiving that by attacking they were always on the losing side, and suffering disproportionate losses, preferred to set afire the Turkish houses and consume by fire; the Armenians, foreseeing the danger, almost without any losses, took refuge in the following places: those of the ward of Kmpet, in Beit-Shalom, and those of Kouyoumjak, in the First Church of the Armenian Protestants. After three days of continuous burning, these two wards were in ruins.

*January 26, 1920, Monday. — The sixth day.*

The Turks, successful in all their undertakings up to this time, and transformed into lions, so to speak, because of the lenient attitude of the French toward them, seemed that they had vowed to ruin and devastate every quarter except where the French were stationed; at the same time they never ceased to shower bullets on the French positions also, and those lethal bullets often performed their function by striking down a soldier here or an Armenian there. Ah, those French! They were always silent; the sons of their own fatherland became sacrificial lambs by the vile cartridges of Turks; they were spectators to the indescribable condition of the Armenians; but they never willed to smash, by a blow, Turkism and put an end to this infernal condition which was gradually assuming grave proportions.

Let me tell you of an occurrence which reveals the alertness of the Turks and the indifference of the French. As you know, the new Latin church occupies an excellent position, and the campanile is very high and dominates the entire immediate area and beyond.

On the fourth story of the campanile, the French had installed machine guns; to begin their tour of duty, it was necessary for the machine gun operators to ascend the stair-cases. On all four sides of each story there were four large windows open and totally exposed. For this reason, the soldiers going up or down those steps were easily noticed by Turks; and the French even did not think of shutting those windows. Only when two soldiers were shot in one day at the same spot did they shut that window through which the bullets had entered. With what, do you know? By a piece of linen cloth, as though they were hanging a curtain, and supposing that the German bullets would be unable to penetrate that linen cloth. The following day,

when another soldier was shot on the same spot, they were obliged to secure the windows by brick walls, through the employ of the unfortunate Armenians who were already suffering from hunger. Nevertheless, they were able to complete this task in barely 5-6 days, a job that should have been done at the very first moment of the war, was thus accomplished 10-12 days later. Finally all the windows were secured by brick walls, excepting the loop-holes, of course. The soldiers were now safe to go about their business.

A soldier, sitting by his machine gun, and eating his dinner and peering through the loop-hole, was shot in the right arm and wounded. This degree of Turkish alertness amazed the French. After this episode, they were extremely careful and alert.

*January 27, 1920, Tuesday. — The seventh day.*

The Armenians of St. Georges parish, already in an unfortunate and miserable condition, were condemned to be annihilated by Turks' first assault — and that moment was not late in coming. The Turks subjected the entire ward to a violent attack, and set fires on all four sides. The wretched Armenians, crazed by the dread of fire, abandoned their homes in those desperate conditions, after suffering hundreds of casualties caused by the hail of enemy bullets. Finally, a small minority took refuge in the Church of Forty Sainted Soldiers. The 12-15 Armenian volunteers who were in St. George's church, also took refuge with the people in the same church.

*January 28, 1920, Wednesday. — The eight day.*

Most frightful was the fate reserved for the parish of St. Asdvadzadzin. This ward, being separated by a small valley from the others, was deprived of any sort of contact with the rest, beginning with the very first day of the war. The other centers were able to communicate at least during nights, every 3-4 days, through Armenian couriers. There were about 30 Armenian volunteers in the church of St. Asdvadzadzin. The Armenians of this parish, starting with the very first day of the war, and unable to confront the violent offensives of the Turks, had taken refuge in their church and, joining forces with the volunteers, audaciously resisted the Turks' attacks for eight days. The ward was already in utter ruin. Only the church stood intact. On the eight day, after a ferocious assault, the Turks succeeded in setting the church afire, where over a 1000 Armenians had taken refuge, plus the approximately 30 volunteers. The environs having been besieged, and since there was no other means of escape, those more than a thousand Armenians and the thirty matchless volunteers were consumed by fire.

Those few Armenians who attempted to escape the fire in the church, were prevented from doing so, because of the barbed wire barriers which the Turks had erected, and were martyred by rifle fire. The unlucky volunteers, while burning up in the raging fires, in order to implore their comrades, namely the French soldiers, for help, waved Red Cross banners 4-5 times. By trumpet, they pleaded for succor.

But, alas! All their outcries were unheeded. Thus, to the very last moment of their lives, they rang Heaven and Earth with their cries for relief; but they were martyred by an indescribable barbarism — more than a 1,000 Armenians and about 30 Armenian volunteers. (3) And the painful part of this entire episode is the

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(3) Note by the transaltor: *Armenian Legionnaires* of the French army.

fact that the French in the other garrisons were acting as mere spectators at the sight of such blood-curdling spectacles.

Why were those "Monsieurs" silent? This was an unintelligible mystery; why were they so lenient in the face of such Turkish barbarisms? Now let's set aside the fact that they could not care less for the annihilation of the civilian Armenians. But was it not a fact that those volunteers were their own legitimate soldiers, assembled under their own adored tri-color?

Ah, those unfortunate legionnaires, longing to avenge wrongs, many of them leaving the comforts their of homes in America, and many others hoping to find survivors of their families, had enlisted — but alas! Pity, much pity, now they themselves were being sacrificed for the aims of the perfidious (4) French diplomacy.

Oh God, if thou art mighty, if Thou art just, why art Thou so silent? Let your heavenly fire balls and thunderbolts, lightning and flames descend not on the heads of the Turks, but those of the French, who are solely responsible for the recent martyrdom of our 20,000 compatriots, which was extremely unjust and entirely unnecessary.

Thus, during the first eight days, the wards inhabited by Armenians were almost reduced to ruins, except the district of Sheikh only, where they were stubbornly fighting the Turks' intensive attacks. In all, twelve armed Armenians were defending the entire district, hoping that the war had almost reached its end, and a French victory was imminent.

Lulled by such reasonable hopes, they were stubbornly continuing their resistance, but the Turks, on the other hand, were intensifying their attacks day by day. This condition continued 3-4 days. On February 1, Sunday, the twelfth day of the battle, the shelter provided for Armenian widows, which was situated between the district of Sheikh and the First Church of Armenian Protestants, was occupied by *Tchetés* (pro-Kemalists) and the occupants were slaughtered early in the morning in their beds by the Turkish *yataghans*. Among them was *also* the famous Sergeant Khatoun of Fundujak, who had gained much fame for her valuable services rendered, — after the armistice — to those Armenians who had been rescued from the desert and were separated from the Arabs.

The occupation of this position separated the district of Sheikh and the First Church of the Armenian Protestants, which up to that day had been in touch with each other. Before this, the 12 brave persons of the Sheikh district had many times implored the French captain in the First Church to dispatch at least 10-12 soldiers, with ample ammunition; but each time their solicitation was rejected on the flimsy pretext that he had no available soldiers, whereas, in fact, he had over 300 under his command.

The people of Sheikh, desperate because no relief was forthcoming, again asked the captain to provide them with at least 10-12 rifles, with sufficient cartridges; but this proposition was also rejected. Their situation had deteriorated very badly.

The shelter that was occupied by the *Tchetés* was a very important position, since it dominated the vicinity of Sheikh, and the First Church. The danger was obvious. The people of the neighborhood of Sheikh again appealed to the captain,

(4) The author's word is "whorish", and rightly so.

to recapture the shelter. But the man again stubbornly rejected any assistance. But they continued their resistance three more days; it was obvious now that there remained but one avenue of escape for them — that was the little valley situated in the north of the district called “Kanle-Déréh” (Bloody Valley). Should this exit also be blocked, they would be subjected to the fate of the unfortunate people of St. Asdvadzadzin. So, they preferred to retreat to the monastery of the Latins. And on the fifteenth day of the battle, February 4, Wednesday night, taking advantage of the dark, about 2000 Armenians took refuge in the Latin monastery, by way of the abovementioned valley. Among these were also those surviving Armenians of the Chichèkli ward, who even during the first days of the war, having been subjected to massacres, had succeeded in taking refuge in the district of Sheikh, via the water tunnel that led there.

Thus, after 15 days of warfare there were no Armenians left in the city. Approximately 3000 Armenians had been massacred up to that day, and the remaining 18,600 Armenians had taken refuge in with 7-8 French garrisons, as I have indicated in my narrative. These Armenians, with very few exceptions, were hungry, ragged and without bedding when they escaped. Home and abode, provisions, clothing, and furniture, etc., in short, everything, was left to the Turks. Those who took refuge in the several garrisons saved only their lives. And in spite of such privations, they were nevertheless full of hope that the final victory would be theirs. But as the hope of victory receded, the misery of the refugees was quadrupled.

*February 5, 1920, Thursday. — The sixteenth day of the war.*

The lot of the Armenians, sheltered and covered in the several garrisons, had attained insufferable proportions. It had become intolerable. Hunger, the lack of bedding and the insufficiency and unsuitability of sleeping quarters, and finally, uncleanness, were posing very real dangers, particularly because of the lack of sanitation facilities. The fear of a contagious epidemic concerned everyone, rich and the poor alike. Everyone was hungry, and was crying for bread.

Each garrison emptied the Armenian and Turkish houses in its vicinity of all provisions; but whenever the soldiers, saw anything in the Armenian's hands, they snatched at it and took it away from him, not even sharing at least a portion of it with him. This was true particularly of the Algerian soldiers with the red *fezzes*, who would grab something from the hands of an Armenian here, and sell it to another Armenian a short distance away. It was the Armenian who risked his life by going into the near by empty Turkish houses, to bring back whatever provisions he found there. But it was not to be for his own use; the unscrupulous French would grab the footstuffs, and serve full portions to their soldiers, storing the remainder in a room. And the Armenians, in their very own country, were only able to *buy* some food, from their would-be friends. Unwillingly, we bowed our heads, in the face of such injustices and privations, always hoping in the future, being sure of the approaching victory of the French. We had completely forgotten our material losses; our homes and abodes and our furnitures, our provisions and our clothing and our money — everything had been destroyed. But, never mind, the glorious victory of the French would right *everything*! We always lulled ourselves with such hopes, thus trying to forget our miseries.

Beit Shalom and the Church of Forty Sainted Soldiers were in a state of



constant combat; the Turks were able 3-4 times to set afire certain parts of buildings at Beit Shalom, but, each time, the Armenians were able to put the fires out. The Turks set afire: the church's wooden schoolhouses, although here also the Armenians tried to stop the spread of the fire. But the hail of Turkish bullets, coming from the field on the south side, hindered them in their endeavors to contain it, and the fire spread. In view of this, the entire people and the soldiers withdrew into the Khans (inns) of the vicinity, without suffering any losses. In the same manner, the first Church of the Armenian Protestants and the adjoining schoolhouse, were burned, but there, because there were three buildings in the path of the flames, the fire was contained, and the strength of this position was unimpaired. Beit — Shalom always stood resolutely despite the Turks violent assaults.

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*February 6, 1920, Friday. — The seventeenth day.*

Today was a day of rejoicing. The appearance of a French airplane at 9 o'clock in the morning inspired new hope to all the Armenians, and every man greeted this messenger dove with shouts of "victory! victory!" Once more we forgot our hunger and calamity, and thought about the hopeful future alone. The airplane, after circling triumphantly several times over the French garrisons, dropped some paper packages, and then went away. At the sight of the airplane, the Turks fired thousands of bullets at the craft, but this fusillade had no effect on it. After the departure of the plane, a deep silence reigned in all quarters of the city. The Turks were firing only sporadically.

On the same day quite a few Turks were noticed on the outer edge of the city. They were apparently fleeing; but the bullets of the Armenian combatants from their positions, struck them down, thus preventing the flight of others. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the airplane returned, spreading its victorious wings, soared about and, after dropping paper packages on French positions, disappeared over the horizon, inspiring us, the Armenians, with new hope and life, and conversely, subjecting the Turks to hopelessness and to thoughts of flight. That night was quiet and serene.

*February 7, 1920, Saturday. — The eighteenth day.*

In the morning, a dead silence prevailed over the city, as though it were devoid of any population. An occasional Turkish rifle shot disturbed the silence. At about nine o'clock in the morning, there appeared in the field to the south of the city a great many French columns: Colonel Norman with his more than 5000 troops, had arrived. The newly contingents, having established their headquarters on the meadow scarcely a half hour from the city, began to surround the city from the east and the west. Emplacing on the higher hillocks their 75 millimeter cannons, the French began to bombard the still-intact Turkish wards. There were no longer even lingering doubts that the glorious victory would be on the French side. The Turks were now completely silent. It was presumed that many of them had fled the city during the night. The city was now almost depopulated and in ruins. Let's not forget also, that before the start of the war, the majority of the Turks had transferred their families to the Turkish villages in the vicinity of the city.

*February 8, 1920, Sunday. — The nineteenth day.*

The night was a very peaceful one, so too the day was almost tranquil. The Turks remained absolutely silent. The newly-arrived troops continued their operations by further tightening their chain of investment; they were now in control of all the roads, and no avenue of escape was left to the Turks. We were now anxiously awaiting the moment of the Turks' surrender. In the afternoon, the Latins' band gathered in the courtyard, and the air resounded with "The Marseillaise", and other stirring selections, — a sign of victory and rejoicing. Over the last several days, the Tricolor flag waved over all French positions.

*February 9, 1920, Monday. — Twentieth day.*

This night also passed very peaceably, except for the occasional dreadful bursts of cannonades that disturbed the silence. In the morning an airplane flew over the city for the third and last time and, as it cruised, it dropped paper packages as before, then it departed. It never dropped the things that we had hoped it would — namely, bombs on Turkish positions. If the mere appearance of a usual single airplane had frightened the Turks to such an extent what kind of panic would they have been subjected to had 3-4 airplanes come in formation and rained bombs on their positions? Unfortunately, however, this was not to be.

Already, the mysterious appearance of this lonely plane over the city on three occasions, and, after dropping the paper packages, its silent departure, had made us very suspicious. And our doubts were completely justified, as we shall understand a bit later, in the sequel to our history. The package dropped in its third mission had indeed contained the orders for the French withdrawal!

*February 10, 1920, Tuesday. — Twenty-first day.*

The Armenians, prophetically, had predicted the evil events to ensue. Even during the night, a rumor to the effect that all the French forces would withdraw from Marash to Islahiyéh, without informing the Turks, spread, everywhere; who could believe such talk? To tell you the truth, I myself never believed it, because such talk seemed very illogical to me. And didn't I have the right to disbelieve? In all of history, such utterly illegal conduct had not yet been seen. If the French had been defeated, they would of necessity retreat: but the victory, although somewhat delayed, was theirs.

Early in the morning, the newly-arrived troops began to bombard the entire city incessantly. Should we attempt to calculate all the shells that fell on the city throughout the day and night, they would number in the thousands.

The forces proceeding from the east had reached Beit-Shalom. The Armenians of the Kmpet ward, who had taken refuge there, joined with the Armenian volunteers and began to attack the Turkish ward of "Divanle", which was the best of the most venomous snakes. They set afire the entire ward with its mosques. With great astonishment we learned that there were only about 8-10 Turks left in that populous ward. According to this report, the city had been completely evacuated. The city was now being burned and bombarded. Therefore, in the face of such solid facts, who would believe that the French were about ready to abandon the city without informing the Turks? If their withdrawal was necessary, they would inform the Turks, thus securing a safe exit for themselves; if they attempted their retreat without any such contact, then such conduct would naturally entail losses.

Nevertheless, in the afternoon, all the soldiers of the company stationed in the Latin monastery began preparations for retreat. When in confidence they were asked "where will you go?", they first said that they would be replaced by the newly-arrived troops; namely, that they would go to the Armory, and a company of newly-arrived troops would replace them in the monastery. We were obliged to believe these assertions; but I always kept thinking, at the sight of these unnatural and illogical proceedings, that something was going on, that, when a detachment of troops is replaced by another, the replacement troop arrived first, took complete charge of operations, and only then did the relieved garrison leave. This was the rule of military procedure; but personnel in charge of the operations were proceeding in precisely the opposite direction. After a few hours, we were told that the company would depart for a 24-hour period, leaving 15-20 soldiers to defend the monastery. When the reason for this move was questioned, they replied that "we will gather, our soldiers from all sectors in the Armory and at 7 o'clock this evening, in a final attack on the Turks, we will bring this problem to an end, once and for all."

This reply also seemed unnatural to me because, in order to attack, it was not necessary to assemble in a center; this arrangement again was contrary to military rules, since, should there be a general offensive, each company, attacking from its own position, could accomplish more than from a centrum position.

And naturally, such equivocal answers raised a spirit of utter hopelessness among the Armenians. A captain in the monastery, with whom I had become very well acquainted, was too making preparations for a journey. Hoping that he would reveal the truth at least to me, I went and knocked at his door.

Upon his permission, I entered and, after a military salute, the following conversation took place between the two of us:

"Mon capitaine, is the news that you are going to leave the monastery, true?"

"Yes. I have received orders to go to the Armory (5) this evening; after night fall, we will depart the monastery."

"What is the reason for this operation? Can you kindly tell me?"

"It is impossible to know the reason for it; but whatever it may be, it is on your behalf."

"To whom are you going to delegate the defense of the monastery?"

"As you know, there are about 20 armed Armenians here; I am going to leave plenty of ammunition for them so that they can defend the monastery until our return".

"You mean to say that you will return".

"I hope that will be the case."

"But, mon capitaine, the people are aroused because of your unexpected abandonment of them; many of them are preparing to leave with you. What comment do you have on this?"

"There is not a single reason for you to be aroused or be afraid; don't you see that our troops are advancing from the west and the south, while bombarding the city; those advancing from the east have already entered the city and are burning

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(5) Translator's Note: The reference is to the main barracks to the west of the American Girls College.

down all the Turkish wards. Where is it? No Turkish gun fire is being heard. I am sure — and you should be too — that everything will be finished this very night, and as of tomorrow, the arena will be all yours. Tell those who are planning on coming along with us, not to think of any such thing, and thus disturb the law and order. Otherwise, I will have to open fire on them."

This warning by the captain promptly spread among the people, and their agitation and wrath doubled. Many were prepared to resist this order and, instead of dying at the Turk's vile hand, they would prefer to die by the bullets of our friends, the French. It was evening; the company, with all its equipment, gathered in the courtyard; they covered the hooves of the mules with felt, so as to minimize the noise as they moved along the road. They smashed all the excess carriages into smithereens; they even demolished their portable kitchen. Then, again, they smashed a machine — gun "mitrailleuse" — with a grenade. Finally, whatever they were unable to take along with them, they destroyed and shattered.

Since they said they were to return, why were they destroying the excess equipment? They were lying! The hour was already seven o'clock. They began to leave through the principal door, and proceeding through the trenches, they went towards the Armory. A sentry with bayonet was still at the door. The captain, turning to the multitude who had flocked together in front of the door, gave notice to them that they (the French) would return after 24 hours, and that he had left 20 Armenian fighting men for their protection, and that he was very sure of their valor. Then he ordered the 20 soldiers to close the door and not to let anyone out, to shoot all disobeying; and he ordered them bravely to defend the monastery for 24 hours, that he would reward them on his return. He then closed the door, and departed with the sentry. The armed Armenians did not let any man out. A few minutes later, we learned that the Abbot had accompanied the troops.

Scarcely ten minutes after the departure of the company, a number of soldiers returned to the monastery, and spread the good tidings that the Turks had already surrendered. The multitude that had been submerged in an ocean of hopelessness, became alive again and, with cries of joy, they shouted, "Long Live France!" After a quarter of an hour, the soldiers went back never again to set foot on the monastery grounds.

It is true that the Turks had surrendered, as I shall tell you shortly. But the return of this hand-ful of soldiers and their deluding us, and their going back after a quarter of an hour, had been nothing more than the consequence of their having been fired upon on the way to their destination. The remorseless ones! They came and deceived us, and then got lost again! Thus, while the French were abandoning all their positions and assembling in the Armory, the Turks, completely unaware of these happenings and awe-stricken by the countless and incessant shells falling on their heads, and impotent, were forced to surrender.

The infamous leader of Tchetés, Dr. Moustafa, a native of Albustan, accompanied by another Turk carrying white flags, came as a delegate to see the general, who was at the theological Seminary.

The doctor informed the general of the willingness of all the Turks to surrender. He asked him that negotiations be started to determine the terms of a peace and, at the same time he beseeched him to stop the bombardment of the Turkish wards. The general, instead of entering into negotiation with the Turks, told the doctor that he had received orders to depart the city with his troops the very

same night, and that he would abandon all his positions, and withdraw.

He then merely enjoined the doctor that, upon their — the French — departure, the Turks were not to harm the Armenians in any way; otherwise, he told him, upon their return, he would deal with them accordingly. And, saying this, he let the doctor go, a free man. Look! Such childish conduct! Should the doctor go and inform the Turks, that the French were leaving that very night, would not the demoralized Turks regain new vitality and attempt to block their route of retreat? Naturally, yes!

The biped jackass called “general” — was he not able to take into consideration this delicate point? Putting aside the lives of the Armenians, would not this bizarre behavior endanger the lives of his own troops? Fortunately, the doctor and his flag-bearer, on their way back home, were spotted and shot by an Armenian (6) and they fell to the ground dead. And this Armenian, without realizing it, thus became instrumental in forestalling a great disaster by slaying the doctor and his man!

The Latin monastery was in turmoil, the people were awe-stricken and, in consternation; they had given up all hope, milling about, without knowing what to do. Many wanted to get out and be killed by Turkish bullets, but the Armenian sentinels would not let them leave. They even shot two of those who disobeyed orders, wounding them seriously. What stark despair, Armenians being shot by Armenian bullets! While the people were in such torment, the Abbot of the monastery, who had gone to the Armory with the troops, wrote a brief note and sent it by an Armenian to the monastery. We read the following:

“My Dears: I recommend that all of you come to the Armory this very night.

Signed,  
Père M. Materno”

The benign clergyman was recommending our withdrawal to the Armory. But why? Perhaps he himself did not know. After reading this note, the 20 Armenian sentinels declared that those who wished to leave might do so. Everyone remained bewildered. Where were we to go? What were we to do? In the dark of the night, with youngsters and women, naked and hungry, where were we to take shelter in the Armory? It had already snowed. The winds were howling violently. This cold had never before been experienced hereabouts. Under these circumstances, would it not be simply idiotic to get out? Let's put all these obstacles aside for the time being. The time was also too late; it was close to midnight; the moon had already risen.

Everywhere, it was light and bright, became of the moon and the fires. If such a multitude were to commence their journey, they would be noticed by the Turks, and they would be shot to the ground. Realizing full well all these obstacles in our path, a group of nearly two hundred of us yet left and began our journey toward the American girls' College, thence to the Armory. With great difficulty, and without any loss, we reached the college.

What a scene! Thousands of Armenians in tears and wailing. The French had also abandoned the Armory, and had left the city two hours before. Everybody was

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(6) Translator's Note: This episode took place on the grounds of the German hospital.

bewildered. Here again, a group of us young fellows gathered together and deliberated. Was it possible for us to catch up with the troops? Perhaps yes! But it was impossible for us to take the direct route. It would be necessary for us to go through mountains and uninhabited places in order to reach our destination safely. After considering all the eventualities, we departed the college and proceeded on. Instead of going southward, we were obliged to go northward, withstanding the bitter, howling winds. After wandering 3-4 hours, we turned southward.

After crossing many hills and dales, we were finally able to notice the pyres in the plain that had been set by the retreating troops. The weather was so cold that we could not stop or dilly dally for a moment; we walked panting — we ran toward those lights, hoping to find our salvation amongst them.

As we progressed in the plain towards our goal, we crossed waters and brooklets, without looking for bridges or fords; and as we emerged from the water, the wet portions of our garb and body froze solid instantly. And thus, two hours before daybreak, we finally reached the troops' campsite. They had just assembled there, and now were preparing to proceed toward Islahiyeh.

Many other Armenians had come from various other positions in the city, among them even a great many women and youngsters. Furthermore, there were Armenians who, after the burning down of Forty Sainted Soldiers church, had taken shelter in the Khans (inns). Since the Khans were situated along the road to Islahiyeh, it had been easy for them to spot the troops' retreat and join with them.

More than three thousand Armenians were following the troops; everyone of them — with few exceptions — was almost naked and hungry. The heart-rending cries of those suffering from cold and hunger reached the high Heavens: but God had plugged His ears, and would not hear them.

The French were still bombarding the city from this location while, nonetheless, willingly or unwillingly, departing, leaving to the Turks Marash and ruins and over 15,000 defenseless Armenians. Although they did not prevent the Armenians from following them, they neither displayed any affection towards them, nor did they even offer some bread to those suffering from hunger. And oftentimes, they would shove the wretched Armenians to the right or left, to the accompaniment of insults.

*February 11, 1920, Wednesday.*

By morning, we had reached the bridge of Ak-Sou; Marash was to our rear, to the north; the city was lost in the black smokes of the fires and the haze of the bombs. The mountain range to the west of Ak-Sou bridge was held by the Tchetés, who opened fire on the troops as they crossed it. The French responded promptly by cannon fire, bombarding their nest, putting them to flight, and thus continued their forward movement. The Armenians persistently followed the troops.

The north winds were still blowing furiously. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the caravan reached El-Oghlou. The Turks of this village had already withdrawn to other Turkish villages a month before. The village was completely deserted. The troops occupied the houses; but we, all of us, remained in the open, shelterless. If this whole affair had been planned with a modicum of care and compassion, all of us could have been housed, too. But who cared for the misery of the Armenian?

Armenian volunteers, bringing in the flocks of the near-by deserted Turkish villages, distributed generous portions of meat to the Armenians, who broiled

them over open fires, and ate them without salt and bread. Shivering with cold, we sat up until the next morning.

*February 12, 1920, Thursday.*

Early in the morning, this immense multitude, approximately 13,000 souls, of whom 10,000 were soldiers, started out toward Bel-Pounar. The wind had abated and the weather was fine; we were hoping that this condition would prevail until we reached Islahiyyeh. But it appeared that God would not allow us to rest. It started to cloud up in the afternoon, and it became biting cold. Late in the evening, at 7 o'clock, we reached Bel-Pounar.

Let me not forget to mention the fact that the journey of the caravan covered 3-4 hours, so that when the Armenians lost one another, it was impossible to refind each other. The tribulations to which we were subjected in Bel-Pounar exceeded the distress that had already experienced at El-Oghlou. Here there was no flock of sheep so we had no meat, albeit without salt and bread, partially to forget our hunger. Even wood was unavailable, so that we could not start fires and warm ourselves somewhat. And any way such procedure became impossible, since, at eight o'clock it started to snow heavily. The Almighty God of Israelites dropped down manna to satisfy their hunger, but to us he sent down snow, white and pure, two ells of it, to be reprise, in order that those who escaped the *yataghan*, might, thus, perish because of the cold.

And the snow, alone, was not sufficient. The winds were buffeting us from the east and the west, from the north and the south, so that the snows were attacking us from all four sides. Through the night, hungry, in the open air and shelterless, we were condemned to fight the snows. The soldiers were sheltered in the small cottages of the village or in their own tents; malicious ones, after drinking their hot tea, and wine, and gloriously eating their consommé with white biscuits, became spectators of this painful scene. The calamity had reached its limit. Wives, brides, little children, babies, men, hapless people of every sex and age, suffering from hunger, cold and snow, cried to the high heavens with heart rending intensity. There was no hope for us from any quarter. God was deaf, and could not hear. He was blind, and could not see. Obviously, he had been the Allah of the Muslims. The Armenian never had a life of ease: now even a tranquil death was being denied us.

*February 13, 1920, Friday.*

Leaving hundreds of victims under the snows of the mountain plain of Bel-Pounar, early in the morning we started out toward Islahiyyeh. Because the snowfall had been over a meter, the roads had become impassable; even the direction of the road was indistinct. It was snowing so heavily that one could not see a foot ahead of him. It was first necessary to clear the road, so that the caravan could proceed. A few French horsemen, taking along with them a great many Armenian young men, headed the column in an attempt to open up a path through the snow. Barely one person could pass through this path, and for this reason, the soldiers pushed the Armenians right and left, causing them to tumble in the snow, so that they could proceed, whereas it was the Armenians who were opening up this path, with great difficulty. Already exhausted because of hunger and cold, the Armenians wanted to die; and this action by the soldiers offered an opportunity to the unfortunates: those who fell in the snow would not attempt to get up even once, sleeping even so peacefully, their faces always cheerful, breathing their very last,

each one freezing in a different posture. The consciousness foreigner, as a spectator of this horrible scene, was laughing at what he was seeing. Only the Armenian volunteers did their utmost: to save a few lives.

As we advanced, the snow was piling even higher, the storm and the winds were becoming ever more violent, and the number of the victims rose proportionately. Bel-Pounar to Islahiyéh, is a distance of scarcely six hours, and many, hoping to reach Islahiyéh at mid-day, did their best to stubbornly continue on their journey. It was mid-day, and we were still in an inhabited mountain plains, trudging through the snows and wondering where was Islahiyéh? In what direction was it? Nobody knew.

It was impossible to distinguish east from west. The horsemen who were leading the Armenians in charge of opening up a path had lost their way, whereas those Armenians knew the area very well. But the presumptuous and arrogant French would not listen to them. Consequently, the Armenians followed the horsemen's instructions and directions. It was past mid-day, and not a single village was yet in sight. For eight hours we had been walking, hungry and without rest, but we could not stand still for a moment, since those who did so froze to death in no time. This we could see with our own eyes. When the news spread along the entire length of the caravan that we had lost our way, many Armenians, in despair, flung themselves most gladly into the snows, and in peaceful sleep and dreams, froze to death. And now the number of the victims had increased very greatly, along every step of the way. On the right side of the path and on the left, Armenians of every sex and age were freezing to death. One has to be a Victor Hugo to be able to adequately describe these "New Misérables" of the sanguinary twentieth century.

Quite a few soldiers also froze to death, most of them Senegalese, blacks, who were never used to cold weather; and many of them said that this was the first time that they had ever seen snow.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, we reached a village called "Zinjirli". The soldiers did not stop here, but continued on their way to Islahiyéh. Beyond this village, the road seemed in good repair, but because of the snow, was impassible. Completely exhausted, some Armenians remained here over-night, to rest. On the following day, they came to Islahiyéh. But the majority continued their journey, hoping to get there in an hour.

We walked two hours, three hours, yet did not reach our destination. Many Armenians regretted their decision not to stay in "Zinjirli". It seemed as though the road was intentionally lengthening. Here again the number of the victims increased greatly; and again, hopelessness prevailed among the Armenians. It became dark, yet we were still walking on. A few Frenchmen were walking ahead of me. Suddenly, and with great joy, they exclaimed, "Oh! la lumière, la lumière." They had seen a light. When Columbus' sailors, perceiving America, shouted, "Land! Land!", they too were saying, "Oh! Light, Light." Because it was this Light that gave hope to life. So this news reinvigorated those in despair.

A few minutes later, the whistle of a locomotive reached our frozen ears, and doubled our rising spirits. After this occurrence, all Armenians, every one of them, gathering their very last energy and advanced toward the Light. Thus, from 8 o'clock until 12, the caravan struggled into Islahiyéh, the Armenians leaving behind them over a thousand victims. But two thousand had survived. The troops had suffered about two hundred dead because of freezing.



In Islahiyéh, the troops were sheltered in houses, especially reserved for them. But no one bothered to assist the Armenians in any way, so, everyone sought shelter in houses that they were able to find. The following day, they began to proceed to Adana in groups. The Armenian National Union, and the American Relief Committee, "A.C.R.N.E," of Adana, did their utmost to care for and shelter those who had been saed from the calamity.

It is estimated that this event cost the French the lives of 800 soldiers, of whom over a hundred were Armenian volunteers. Also lost. I think were the officers. The French, before their retreat from Marash, left about 150 wounded soldiers in the care of the Americans.

It is thought that this twenty-two day war for Marash cost the Turks about 2000 lives. But our losses were completely disproportionate. If, later there were 8000 Armenians still alive in Marash, the city with the 7-8 villages in its environs yet lost more than 18,000 Armenians. Again, we were the real losers.

It is impossible to calculate the material losses, because three-fourths of the city was set on fire, and the remaining one quarter, because of the shelling, was in ruins. Consequently, Marash today is nothing more than a devastated place.

END OF MARASH SERIES